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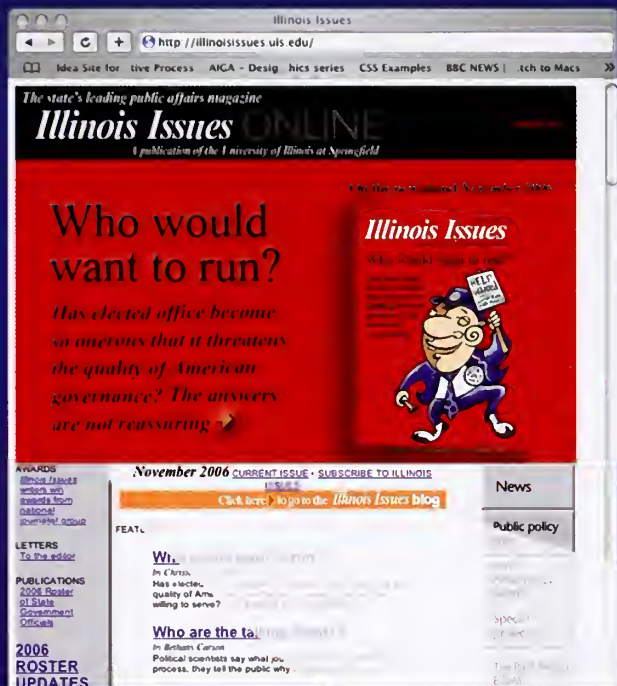
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A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield



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blog

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The National Association of Capitol Reporters and Editors, Capitolbeat, awarded *Illinois Issues'* blog its top prize in online beat reporting for coverage of the spring legislative session. The blog, created by Bethany Jaeger and our then-Public Affairs Reporting intern Deanese Williams-Harris, was updated several times a day as the session ground its way into serious overtime.



Find it at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

Taylor Personneau



An era ends

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The magazine covers displayed above were some of Peggy Boyer Long's favorites during her more than 13-year tenure as editor.



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Taylor Pensoneau



ILLINOIS DOCUMENTS
JAN 03 2003
JENNIFER STAN

An era ends as longtime editor retires

by Taylor Pensoneau

The era of Peggy Boyer Long at *Illinois Issues*, a more than 13-year span ending with her retirement in December, was a period of achievement second to none in the magazine's history.

Without fail, Peggy poured into the magazine the same diligence, energy and, above all, political savvy that I first saw her display many years earlier when she was a public radio reporter in the Illinois Statehouse.

Nothing more defined Peggy through the years than her bent for in-depth

exploration of the burning questions surrounding all facets of public life in the state, something clearly reflected in the content of the magazine after she joined the staff as editor in 1994.

Beyond that, she teamed at the helm of the magazine with Edward Wojcicki, publisher of *Illinois Issues* for much of the time Peggy was editor, to bring broadened coverage of such areas of interest as the arts, humanities and science. It definitely was a growth period for the magazine.

Still, Peggy's guiding hand did not stray from the original stated goal of the magazine to provide thorough and objective coverage of public affairs at the state and local levels of government in Illinois. Upholding this goal earned Peggy wide recognition, including her receipt back in November of the Paul Simon Public Service Award from the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform.

Upon reflection, the entire run of the magazine has been truly noteworthy. I speak from a vantage point beyond



The magazine covers displayed above were some of Peggy Boyer Long's favorites during her more than 13-year tenure as editor.

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the more than two decades in which I have been a member of its Advisory Board. Back in the years when I was the Springfield-based Illinois political writer for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, I was one of the journalists invited in December 1974 to a preview of the magazine's first issue coming out the following month. Also, I was a frequent contributor in the early years.

The chance that *Illinois Issues* would survive was bolstered greatly by the trio of heavy hitters instrumental in its inception — the late Paul Simon, Sam Gove and the late Sam Witwer. Simon had been directing the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield (then Sangamon State University). However, by the time the first issue of the magazine was being circulated, he was in Washington, D.C., at the start of his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives. Gove was director of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois, and Witwer was the father of Illinois constitutional reform. Gove was the first chairman of the magazine's board and its membership included Witwer.

In pushing for the magazine, Simon, Gove and Witwer had at least one thing in common. As Michael Lennon, an early editor and later publisher of the magazine, accurately put it, all three thought that public affairs journalism was simply too important to be left solely to journalists.

The vision for *Illinois Issues* shared by its founders reached full fruition under Peggy's tutelage. While the content certainly was intended to go beyond routine journalistic takes on issues, the pages still were not to be dominated by ivory-tower academics expounding as if for a sociology textbook. Balance was called for, and Peggy answered.

Academicians rightfully were given a green light to set issues in context through detailed perspectives. Journalists were offered a wide path to provide insights on the nuts and bolts of matters that, while crucial to the public interest, often received short shrift in newspapers or on broadcasts. From the start, this writer — like others from the journalistic side — welcomed the opportunity to

write at length in the magazine on subjects deserving more ink than was afforded by newspapers.

So on her watch the magazine was a cornucopia of thought. Peggy made sure that a stable of talented writers remained in play, individuals such as Bill Lambrecht and Pat Gauen of the *Post-Dispatch*, Kathy Best of the *Seattle Times*, freelancer Jim Krohe and historian Bob McGregor. Peggy came up with some new wrinkles, too, such as her push for more essayistic analyses.

The best example was her initiation of the Paul Simon Essay series, which got off the ground with a composition by political philosopher Jean Bethke Elstain. Peggy also broadened the purview of the magazine to more geographical areas of the state, a move to look beyond Springfield and Chicago.

Of course, part of the credit for the impetus to bring about increased diversity in the magazine's coverage goes to the Advisory Board members, who are asked to suggest topics, situations and people important enough for the magazine's attention. In Peggy's tenure, the board has included — in addition to notable academics — former governors and other major political figures, business and union leaders, and a mix of other individuals from major sectors of Illinois life.

For the past four years or so, Peggy has served as executive editor of *Illinois Issues*, as well as director of publications for UIS's Center for State Policy and Leadership. In spite of the demands on her time, I was delighted when she joined me on the governing board of the Illinois Center for the Book. On another front, she and I have collaborated on an update of Robert Howard's classic book, *The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent*, a publication of *Illinois Issues*.

As the old saying goes, Peggy leaves big shoes to fill at the magazine. However, the solid product, which has been strengthened even more during her stewardship, justifies optimism that the publication will continue to fulfill its unique role as the public affairs magazine for the Prairie State. □

Taylor Pensoneau is a longtime member of Illinois Issues' Advisory Board.

Illinois Issues

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

January 2008

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Subscription questions: Illinois Issues, Subscription Division, P.O. Box 2795, Springfield, IL 62708-2795 or call 1-800-508-0266. Hours are 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Central Time, Monday-Friday (except holidays). *Subscriptions:* \$39.95 one year/ \$72 two years/ \$105 three years; student rate is \$20 a year. Individual copy is \$5. Back issue is \$5. Illinois Issues is indexed in the PAIS Bulletin and is available electronically on our home page: <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>. Illinois Issues (ISSN 0738-9663) is published monthly, except July and August are combined. December is published online only. Periodical postage paid at Springfield, IL, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Illinois Issues, Subscription Division, P.O. Box 19243, Springfield, IL 62794-9243.

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Illinois Issues is published by Center Publications
Center for State Policy and Leadership
<http://csp.uis.edu>

Bethany Jaeger



Open legislative seats could mean open doors for GOP freshmen and new GOP leaders

by Bethany Jaeger

At a time when Illinois Democrats control all six executive offices and hold strong majorities in the state House and Senate, it's ironic that Republicans could be poised to become power brokers. True, the ongoing legislative session caused at least a handful of Republican lawmakers to reassess their legislative careers and their personal lives. Yet, while that may bring bad news in the short term, there could be a silver lining in the Illinois GOP's future.

Five Republican members of the House and two in the Senate plan to retire when their current terms end in January 2009. And state Rep. Aaron Schock of Peoria is vacating his seat in hopes of replacing retiring U.S. Rep. Ray LaHood of Peoria. (State Sen. Chris Lauzen of Aurora is running to replace U.S. Rep. Dennis Hastert of Plano, but Lauzen's state seat is not up for re-election this year.)

The number of Republicans leaving the Illinois General Assembly will affect the dynamic of the GOP, but the open seats could breathe new life into a party that has become used to serving in the minority.

A new optimism could be needed, though. Frustration mounted last year as the result of Democratic infighting when Gov. Rod Blagojevich teamed with Senate President Emil Jones Jr. against House Speaker Michael Madigan. The stalemate pulled rank-

The number of Republicans leaving the Illinois General Assembly will affect the dynamic of the GOP, but the open seats could breathe new life into a party that has become used to serving in the minority.

and-file lawmakers back to Springfield at least once a month to meet in overtime session, requiring them to break professional and personal commitments along the way. Most of the GOP retirees say they're leaving the legislature to spend more time with family, particularly after the seemingly never-ending session.

Losing veteran Republicans, four of whom serve leadership roles, will be especially difficult for that party.

"The disadvantage is that tried-and-true legislators who you could count on, who had developed some expertise, who were good people, decide not to run again," says former GOP lawmaker Tom Ryder, who retired in 2001 after 18 years in the House.

Ryder points to Danville Rep. Bill Black, the deputy minority leader and a passionate and tireless watchdog of the

legislative process for nearly 22 years.

Black has served as floor leader since 1991, the longest tenure in GOP leadership. He told Champaign's WDWS-AM radio that being in the minority 19 of his nearly 22 years began to weigh on him. Case in point: He tried but failed last year to urge the Democratic leadership to release such GOP-backed legislation as a capital plan for road and school construction projects. And he tried to advance a measure that would have released money from the approved state budget for education.

"I have a passion about the process," Black told the station. He called the 2007 session "convoluted."

Bolingbrook Rep. Jim Meyer, a U.S. Air Force veteran, will have served 16 years by the end of a tenure that included recent duties as minority spokesman on the Telecommunications Committee, which drastically changed competition between cable and telephone industries.

Meyer, who spent 14 of his 16 years in the minority party, says he understands the difficulty of bringing home the bacon for his district when leaders of the opposite party run the state. He says he's not retiring because of frustration, although there was plenty.

"At times, we would be called to Springfield, and nothing would be done," he says. "The extra time spent in Springfield doesn't bother me as long as it's productive. And this year certainly

was not productive.”

But there’s a difference between being cynical and being frustrated, he adds. “I probably am as frustrated as anybody else in that I realize we have massive problems in this state, but the [governor failed to engage] the legislature in a dialogue. He just doesn’t do that. And if you refuse to do that, to me it’s almost like a disdain for the legislative process in working with the legislative branch on anything.”

Rep. Carolyn Krause, who is retiring after almost 15 years, has fought for many issues, including health care and medical insurance for the increasingly uninsured age group of 50 to 64. A moderate Republican, she supported a measure that would allow pharmacists to dispense emergency contraception without a prescription. Last year, she also became a leader in the debate over skyrocketing electricity rates.

Also stepping down is Rep. Patricia Reid Lindner, an Aurora Republican who has served since 1993 and recently helped lead an effort to separate the state’s juvenile justice system from the adult correctional system. She also advocated for education and women’s health issues.

Rep. Joe Dunn of Naperville, a certified public accountant and small-business advocate, also is retiring. He has served since 2003.

“These folks are the steady folks,” Ryder says. “They’re the ones who do their jobs and, with the exception of Bill Black, they’re not necessarily the flashiest or the loudest, but they’re just solid people. Losing those folks is always difficult.”

House Minority Leader Tom Cross agrees. “From both the political and policy standpoint, it’s going to be a loss.”

Over in the Senate, Minority Leader Frank Watson says his GOP Caucus will miss the leadership, legislative experience and practical thinking of two more members, assistant minority leaders Todd Sieben and Bill Peterson.

Sieben is a 21-year legislator from Geneseo. The U.S. Navy veteran says he’s retiring to spend more time with his three adult children and seven grandchildren and says he predicts more of the same when he’s gone.

“I think the tension and the animosity among the three Democratic leaders is so great that very little progress will be made

The silver lining for the Republican Party is that the Democratic bungling actually could play to the GOP’s advantage come Election Day.

over the next few years,” he says.

Sieben spent 10 years in the minority and 11 years in the majority as a strong voice for agriculture and small business.

That expertise brought him an extra level of respect in both political parties, says Sen. Kirk Dillard, a Hinsdale Republican and caucus whip.

“If you were to pick a handful of legislators who are most respected and admired, Todd Sieben would be on both political parties’ lists,” Dillard says. “He’s very soft-spoken, but everybody drops what they’re doing to listen to him.”

Dillard says the Senate, especially the GOP Caucus, also will miss the institutional knowledge and mild-mannered approach of retiring Sen. Peterson of Long Grove.

Peterson is a U.S. Army veteran, teacher and elementary school principal. He has served 15 years in the Senate and 10 in the House. Notably, he worked to change the state’s absentee voting laws to allow people to vote in person before an election. He also sponsored the earned income tax credit for low-income families and an affordable housing tax credit to benefit low-income seniors.

“Following this unbelievably volatile legislative year with tremendous infighting, the personalities of Sens. Peterson and Sieben are going to be greatly missed because they were common-sense men who had low-key but highly respected personalities,” Dillard says.

Dillard adds himself to the list of veteran legislators — he has 14 years in office and many years before that on the staffs of former GOP Govs. Jim Thompson and Jim Edgar — who need

to step up and fill the role of gentleman counselor. Their challenge is to bring bipartisanship and a sense of calm to “an unbelievably stormy legislature,” he says.

“I’ve never seen the legislature this volatile or this polarized, or quite frankly, this inept.”

The silver lining for the Republican Party is that the Democratic bungling actually could play to the GOP’s advantage come Election Day.

“I think some of the frustration with the lack of progress by our current governor may lead some people, independents primarily, that may vote for Republicans this time,” Sieben says.

The vacated seats also could give rise to new Republican stars, says Ryder.

“Maybe some of these empty slots will work. Maybe one of the openings will provide the next Kirk Dillard, or the next Dan Rutherford, or the next Tom Cross or Frank Watson to come in and emerge. The Republicans have a lot of bright young faces. Maybe this will add some more.”

Rutherford is a Chenoa Republican who has been in the Senate since 2003 and served the previous 10 years in the House.

Watson adds Peru Sen. Gary Dahl to fill Sieben’s role as agriculture advocate and sophomore Sen. Matt Murphy of Palatine to fill Peterson’s role as taxpayer advocate.

In the House, Cross looks to Rep. Chapin Rose, an attorney from Mahomet, to lead the GOP caucus on energy and downstate issues and Rep. Roger Eddy of Hutsonville, a downstate school superintendent, to continue leading on education issues. And, Cross says, Rep. Ruth Munson of Elgin specializes in women’s issues. Rep. JoAnn Osmond of Antioch fulfills the leadership role of a “strong personality in a calm way,” he says.

In the House, Ryder adds Rep. Jim Watson of Jacksonville to the potential leadership list. Watson has served in the legislature since 2001, and he re-enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves last year. He’s the Republican spokesman on the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

“There are lots of folks who just have to develop the patience to stick it out,” Ryder says, “but this too can pass.” □

Bethany Jaeger can be reached at capitolbureau@aol.com.

BRIEFLY

Photograph by Heather Hayes, courtesy of the office of Secretary of State Jesse White

SECURE LICENSES

By the end of this month, Illinois residents will start receiving new, high-tech driver's licenses and state ID cards designed to prevent identity theft and fraudulent licenses.

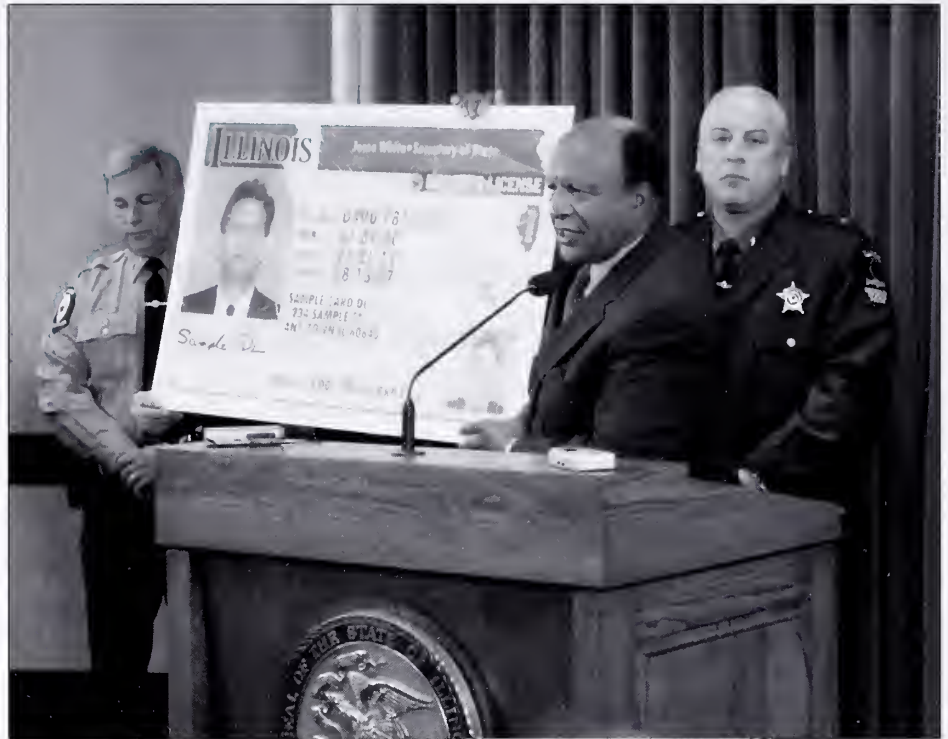
Drivers and individuals with state ID cards don't need to get the new cards until their current ones expire. The Illinois secretary of state's office estimates all residents will receive a newly designed card within four years.

New cardholders might notice such new features as two photos, one that's smaller and fuzzier, as well as embedded multicolored, wavy lines.

Other features are invisible to the naked eye. They include intentionally incorrect dates and misspellings on various holograms of the state seal and very fine print that can't be reproduced on a standard printer. Each card will be specially coded to the individual and to the facility in which it's produced.

The multiple layers of security features can't be duplicated, said Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White while announcing the new cards last fall at a Statehouse news conference. He said he's confident the new cards are "among the most reliable identification documents in the country."

White said law enforcement and businesses already have the equipment needed to see the covert details: magnifying lenses, laser pens and ultraviolet lights.



Secretary of State Jesse White announces a new identification card and driver's license.

Drivers' facilities are expected to install the machines to make the new cards this month. The cost per card is 2 cents cheaper than the cost of producing the current cards, \$1.37 compared to \$1.39, according to White.

White said he expects the new cards to meet minimum security standards to be announced as part of the federal Real ID Act. Enacted in 2005, the federal law is expected to require the new driver's licenses and state ID cards to board

airplanes and enter government buildings. However, lack of adequate federal funding and delayed release of those rules led Illinois to join about 27 states that considered measures to reject the Real ID Act without assurance the new rules won't violate privacy rights.

Regardless, White says the new Illinois cards exceed the expected federal security standards. "We're ahead of the game."

Bethany Jaeger

UPDATES

- The Illinois Supreme Court will hear a First Amendment lawsuit filed against Gov. Rod Blagojevich by a group of pharmacists and pharmacy operators who oppose the governor's mandate that all pharmacies dispense emergency contraception, commonly known as Plan B, regardless of individual pharmacists' religious beliefs (see *Illinois Issues*, June 2006, page 10).
- A bipartisan legislative committee shot down Gov. Rod Blagojevich's plan to extend state-sponsored health insurance to 147,000 Illinois adults, but he planned to proceed anyway (see *Illinois Issues*, October 2007, page 18).
- A federal judge ruled a suburban Chicago school district is prohibited from enforcing the state's recent "moment of silence" law, enacted with an override of the governor's veto (See *Illinois Issues*, November 2007, page 9).

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

Follow the money

Anyone with a computer and Internet access has a new tool to find out whether people who donate to political campaigns also hold Illinois state contracts. The effort adds one more method to deter so-called pay-to-play politics, or the attempt to buy influence with public officials as they make policy decisions or award state contracts. Comptroller Daniel Hynes announced a new Web site, *Open Book*, shortly before election season started in the fall.

"In the absence of a statutory ban on contributions from those who have state contracts, what we can do is create more transparency, more awareness, better information for watchdog groups, the media, citizens, so that people know who's doing what," Hynes said at a Statehouse news conference.

The database combines information from the comptroller's accounting records with campaign disclosure reports filed twice a year with the Illinois State Board of Elections.

The program allows individuals to compare state contracts side-by-side with political contributions. It also lists the address of the person or company that holds a state contract and how much was donated to any political campaign in each fiscal year back to 1999. Previously, matching contractors with campaign donors required searches on the separate Web sites of each state agency.

Hynes said he also hopes the new tool will apply more pressure on state officials to advance ethics legislation drafted by Hynes. The measure would ban and criminalize pay-to-play politics. It gained unanimous support in the House and lined up 46 sponsors in the Senate, but President Emil Jones Jr. has never called it for a vote in his chamber.

Blagojevich spokeswoman Rebecca Rausch says the governor favors more sweeping ethics legislation than the measure backed by Hynes. "Why not do it right the first time? Why set the bar low? It has taken many, many, many years to pass the first round of ethics reform in 2003. We shouldn't squander the opportunity to do something sweeping and across-the-board now."

Kent Redfield, director of campaign finance research based at the University of Illinois at Springfield, says that's a poor excuse and more disclosure is important to prevent conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, from eating away at public confidence in the system.

Bethany Jaeger

Supreme challenge

Protection for Illinois doctors and hospitals in medical malpractice lawsuits moved closer to making its way to the Illinois Supreme Court for review this fall.

A Cook County Circuit Court judge overturned the 2005 state law that limits the amount patients can receive in cases alleging medical malpractice. Current law caps jury awards for pain and suffering to \$500,000 for doctors and \$1 million for hospitals.

Cook County Judge Diane Larsen says the law is unconstitutional because it violates separation of powers and patients' rights. The ruling does not negate the state law, but opens the door for it to advance to the state Supreme Court where such caps have twice been ruled unconstitutional.

"The basic argument is that it's the judicial system that gets to decide what counts as an acceptable remedy and that the legislature is invading that province by enacting a cap," says Professor David Hyman at the University of Illinois Law School, where he teaches civil procedure and health care regulation.

The 2005 debate over whether to limit jury awards spanned two years and polarized trial lawyers, medical groups and insurance companies, as well as Democrats and Republicans. The Illinois Trial Lawyers Association believes the caps violate the state Constitution and pad the pockets of insurance executives. The Illinois State Medical Society and ISMIE Mutual Insurance Co., the insurer that's owned and operated by doctors, backed the 2005 legislation and said caps are necessary to hold down malpractice insurance premiums and keep doctors in this state.

Bethany Jaeger

Waste to gas

The central Illinois city of Taylorville is taking a step into the future with its new alternative energy plant. The Five Oaks gas-to-energy facility, created by Houston-based Waste Management Inc., opened in November and provides power made from trash for about 2,500 homes.

The facility uses methane created through decomposition to power four engines. It accepts up to 2,000 tons of household and industrial waste a day from Christian County and surrounding counties, as well as the city of Chicago.

The electricity generated from burning methane is sold to Ameren CIPS. Hot water is a byproduct that is sold to newly relocated Buckley Growers of Illinois.

Buckley Growers, a horticultural company, moved to Taylorville from Springfield specifically to work with Five Oaks. The water purchased from the facility significantly reduces Buckley's energy bill. Instead of using natural gas to heat water in boilers, the company now purchases preheated water from Five Oaks.

"Our engines produce 40,000 Btu of heat per minute. With four engines that is a lot of hot water. [This relationship] will lower their overall utility bill around 70 percent," says Dan Erni, an environmental engineer for Waste Management.

Other aspects of the process are green, too. Garbage is buried in lined pits and topped with a pipe. It takes a year or two before the garbage emits landfill gas, a combination of methane and carbon dioxide. Grass is planted above the garbage.

"This process we are seeing developed is one of the first to make electricity while also utilizing hot-water waste from the generation process as a source of energy with little to no negative environmental impact," says Taylorville Mayor Frank Mathon.

The facility is projected to be in use for about 40 years.

Bonnie Burcham

Early bird state

By 8 a.m. on a brisk day, 650 political candidates stood in line to file paperwork with the Illinois State Board of Elections so they could participate in the earliest primary election in state history on February 5. By the end of that October business day, 666 individuals had filed petitions to run for federal, state or local offices. That's more than double the number of candidates who filed on the first day in 2006, when voters elected their party candidates in the spring.

Many more people filed October 29 because it was the first time Democratic candidates for president and candidates for delegates to the Democratic National Convention filed the same day as candidates for federal, state and county offices, according to Daniel White, executive director of the State Board of Elections.

To everyone's surprise, the petition-filing process went more smoothly than previous years despite the record number of filings, White says. "We handled it in almost the same amount of time, and I think that was the preparation and the planning that we put into it."

The agency had ample warning. In early 2007, state lawmakers introduced legislation to move up the primary date by six weeks in an attempt to help U.S. Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois secure the Democratic presidential nomination from his home state. Obama served eight years in the Illinois Senate before heading to the Hill.

Illinois joins some 35 other states and the District of Columbia in holding February primaries, according to the nonpartisan National Conference of State Legislatures think tank in Washington, D.C. Eight states will hold primaries in January. The philosophy is that early primaries increase the states' national status in presidential elections. A later primary risks being moot if party candidates already are determined by the early state primaries.

In Illinois, the six-week bump means logistical adjustments for the board.

After petitions are filed, the agency conducts the time-consuming process of considering "objections," whether candidates filed the necessary number of signatures and whether all those

signatures are from legitimate voters.

"[The process] takes man-hours, and there's no way around that," White says. "As much as we can improve things with technology, there are certain things that are going to take some time."

That process used to take place around the Christmas and New Year's holidays, but a February primary bumps the objection process to the fall.

"If anything, we're probably a little bit grateful that it doesn't come in the middle of the holidays," says Steve Sturm, the agency's legal counsel.

The February 5 election also means all new dates for the public.

"I think there are a lot of voters who still don't realize the primary has moved up, and that moves up corresponding dates such as the last day to register for early voting," White says.

The last day to register to vote is January 8. The last day for early voting is January 14. And, White says, it'll take a lot of public awareness efforts to ensure everyone knows the primary election is February 5.

Bethany Jaeger



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CIVIC KNOWLEDGE

Few students do well in survey

A recent survey of 14,000 randomly selected freshmen and seniors at 50 U.S. colleges and universities revealed a narrow, but telling view of the depth of knowledge about America's bedrock principles — historical, political and economic thought that informs the nation's citizenry.

The University of Connecticut's Department of Public Policy, on behalf of the conservative Wilmington, Del.-based Intercollegiate Studies Institute, administered a 60-question, multiple-choice civics literacy test about history, government, international relations and the market economy (www.americancivilliteracy.org).

Two Illinois schools were chosen to participate, and they performed well alongside the likes of such Ivy League universities as Harvard and Yale, and such top-tier public schools as the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and the University of California-Berkeley. Wheaton College in Wheaton ranked seventh in percent of correct answers, and Illinois State University in Normal ranked eighth in growth of knowledge from

freshmen to seniors. However, the highest score of any school was below 70 percent.

Wheaton, a private DuPage County liberal arts college with 2,400 students, often scores high on national tests, says Amy Black, professor of American Government. "We often find ourselves among the Ivies." However, she is somewhat skeptical of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute test and its conclusions. "Of course, we want our students to gain specific, factual knowledge, but I'm much more interested in training our students to be critical thinkers, strong writers and good at oral communication as well. We want them to be able to process information, determine what's the most important, and learn how to find answers to questions when they don't know them. You really can't measure those things so well."

Elizabeth Beaumont, who directed a 21-college study for the Political Engagement Project, an initiative of the national American Democracy Project, understands the larger purpose of the Intercollegiate Studies test. "We could all do more to boost our basic level of civic knowledge." But she questions whether the average citizen participating in politics is really disserved by not remembering when Jamestown was founded.

The results of the study she led showed students made significant gains in their knowledge of and motivation to participate in the political process. Illinois State University is one of eight institutions nationwide that volunteered to widen the project to include more students and provide opportunities in the classroom and in the community for political engagement.

Beverley Scobell

Beyond the ivy-covered walls

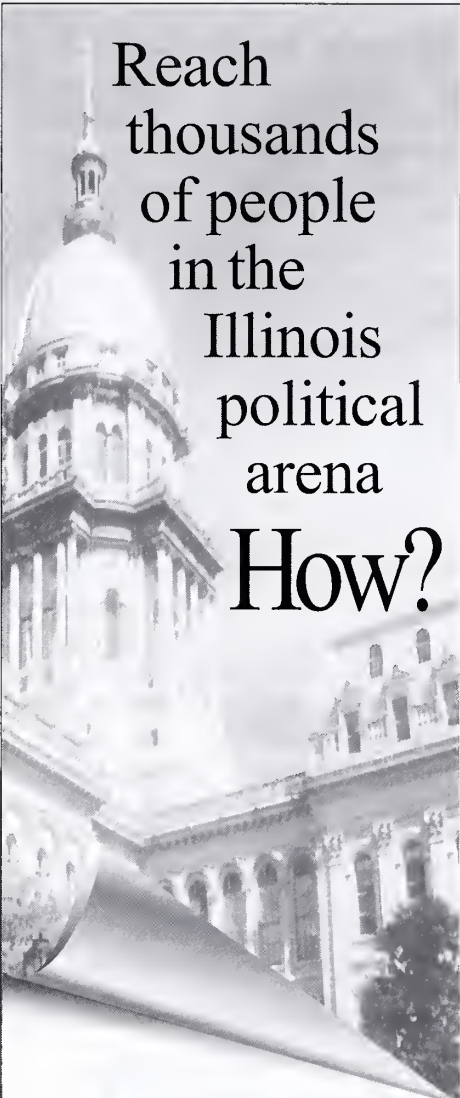
"The University of Chicago has turned the city into a laboratory," says Bart Schultz.

The philosophy professor says that somewhat tongue-in-cheek because the university has produced studies that have been helpful to the city. But as special programs coordinator at the Graham School of General Studies and director of the Civic Knowledge Project, he engages the community differently. He and his students work interactively with the South Side community, teaching debate in elementary and middle schools and offering a range of classes to low-income adults through the Odyssey Project, a collaborative effort of the university and the Illinois Humanities Council.

Schultz says his program teaches humanities texts — literature, U.S. history, critical thinking and writing, philosophy and art history — in a way that makes the subjects relevant in real-world political and social engagement. At a recent panel discussion, he says, the Odyssey students spoke about the contemporary relevance for them of reading Plato's *Apology* and other great books of western civilization.

"They found it empowering. They found it a way to find their voice, to give them access to the cultural life of Chicago in ways they've never had before," says Schultz. "We think that involving this wider range of people, not just the elite audiences limited to universities, but a genuinely wider range, people who are generally discouraged from voting by the political parties, is part of what education for a stronger democracy means."

Beverley Scobell



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Illinois bucks trend

A recent national study showed the number of wild game hunters nationwide is declining to the point where some state conservation departments are feeling the pinch of lost license revenue. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service statistics indicate that from 2001 to 2006 the national percentage of hunters fell from 6 percent of the total population to 5 percent.

However, according to Joshua Winchell of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois held steady, retaining hunters at 3 percent of the population since 2001. In fact, John Buhnerkempe, chief for the Division of Wildlife Resources at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, says the total number of Illinois hunters has grown from 295,000 in 2000 to 330,000 today.

This means cash for the state. In addition to keeping the ecosystem healthy, hunters bring in considerable conservation revenue. Taxes on firearms and ammunition alone brought in \$5 million in the 2005-2006 Illinois hunting season. The purchase of hunting and fishing licenses added \$25 million, bringing the total to more than \$30 million in

*Photograph by John Stehn,
courtesy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*



White-tailed deer

conservation funds, not counting money received from private donations and the purchase of memorabilia or other types of hunting products.

The department sponsors several

programs to get adults and children more involved. The hunter safety program, primarily directed toward younger hunters, has shown a 14 percent increase in participation since 1996, the year hunter safety certification began to be required for anyone born after 1980. Another top program is the two-day youth-only deer-hunting season. Last year, more than 5,200 permits were sold. For adults, the department provides public hunting grounds. Limited hunting areas is one factor the study cited for declining numbers of hunters in other states.

There are other benefits, too. "Hunters are key in keeping overabundant wildlife — deer, Canada geese — at levels that reduce human/wildlife conflicts and environmental damage," says Buhnerkempe.

Mike Checkett, a media relations biologist for Ducks Unlimited, agrees.

"Hunters have always been strong conservationists. They have a desire to see the land as healthy and naturally functioning as possible. And naturally functioning means [individuals] participating as hunters and anglers."

Bonnie Burcham

Report cards show most schools meet and exceed goals

School district superintendents say extra hours and extra effort is what it took over the past two years to bring more than 200 schools and districts up to state standards driven by the federal No Child Left Behind law. The Illinois State Board of Education removed 184 schools and 36 districts from academic improvement status after each met the Adequate Yearly Progress goals for two consecutive years.

The reason for being on the academic improvement list was weaknesses in special education scores for districts like Wood Dale School District 7 in suburban Chicago and Mount Zion Community Unit School District 3 in central Illinois.

Wood Dale Superintendent John Corbett says the teachers took a different approach to meeting the needs of the special ed students and individualized the teaching/learning experience to an even greater extent.

In Mount Zion, Superintendent Darbe Brinkoetter says the special education students performed better when teachers created a smaller, more comfortable environment for test taking.

Superintendent Larry Elsea says special ed scores were high in Southwestern Community Unit School District 9, which serves 1,800 students in a 175-square-mile area of Macoupin and Jersey counties. Of the one in four students in special education, 91 percent met or exceeded goals. A focus on math and reading in the general population returned improvements in the kindergarten through eighth grades.

A move to smaller class size for language arts and math was one strategy that helped the students of Carpentersville Middle School improve their scores and take Community Unit District 300 off the academic improvement list. The school, with 550 students from predominantly low-income families, had struggled for four years, says Superintendent Kenneth

Arndt, who oversees 19,200 students in pre-K through 12th grade 45 miles northwest of Chicago. Reaching progress benchmarks required a concentrated effort, he says, from teachers, administrators, school staff, parents and other community members.

In addition to these districts that met two-year goals, the state board's data shows that another 113 schools and 102 districts reached their 2007 goals and will be removed from academic improvement status if they meet Adequate Yearly Progress marks this year. However, that may not be easy. To reach the federal goal of all students making progress by 2014, the numbers are ratcheted up each year. This year's state goal is 62.5 percent, compared to 55 percent for 2007.

Brinkoetter says, "It's going to be tougher and tougher to continue to meet [Adequate Yearly Progress]. The bar keeps going higher and higher."

Beverley Scobell

Q&A Question & Answer

Wayne Whalen



Wayne Whalen,
circa 1969

The Chicago lawyer and vice president of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum Foundation Board was a delegate to the state's 1969-1970

constitutional convention. He represented the northwestern counties of Carroll, Jo Daviess, Ogle, Stephenson and Whiteside and chaired the Style, Drafting and Submission Committee.

After earning his law degree in 1967 from Northwestern University in Evanston, he got a taste of politics at the 1968

Democratic National Convention. He represented the presidential campaign of Minnesota Sen. Eugene McCarthy, who lost the nomination to then-Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

Whalen formed strong feelings about the state of the country's politics and about civil rights, leading him to run as a delegate to the state constitutional convention the next year. He says he won because voters trusted him as a 30-year-old Hanover native and high school athlete from a family of duck farmers, not because of his stance on such controversial issues as merit selection of judges. He still supports that idea.

He foresees candidates in any future convention facing different challenges fueled by political polarization. "I don't think anybody ever asked me for my views on abortion the entire time I ran, for example. And gay rights and marriage were not on the table."

He talked with Statehouse Bureau Chief Bethany Jaeger about these and other characteristics of the 1969-1970 Con-Con, as well as what voters should consider when they see the 2008 ballot question on whether to convene another. This is an edited version of that conversation. (For a complete version, see the

Illinois Issues December online edition.)

Q. How do conditions compare to the 1969-70 constitutional convention?

As we sit here today, the conditions seem quite different. I think that there's probably an uneasiness [about] empowering governments, whether it's the state government or Cook County government or city of Chicago government or other home-ruled units.

Q. Should voters consider the political tensions among House Speaker Michael Madigan, Sen. President Emil Jones Jr. and Gov. Rod Blagojevich when voting whether to hold another convention?

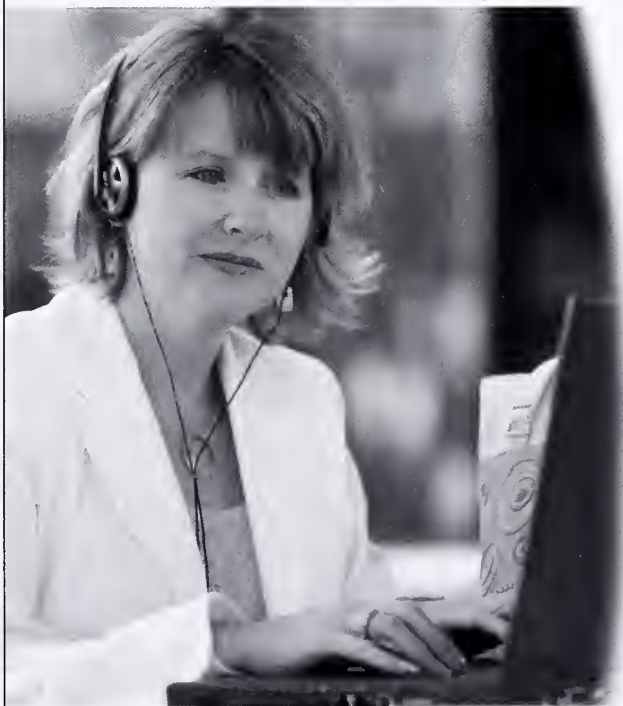
Yes, they should. Because any constitutional convention has to be called pursuant

to legislation passed by the General Assembly and approved by the governor. It's the lawmaking process. So it is this General Assembly, and this governor, which will determine how the constitutional convention is composed, how it is funded and when it is held.

Q. What about other hot-button issues such as education funding reform, ethics and property tax relief? Do you see those as appropriate for a constitutional convention?

No. I think that that's something the legislature should deal with itself. They have the full power to do it. They should have the political will to do it. There is no meaningful restriction on them, and they should act. They should not try and lay off those kinds of decisions beyond themselves. □

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Black and blue

Illinois Democrats are bruised from months of infighting, making some candidates vulnerable as the state's GOP looks to regain its footing

by Mike Riopell

Changing political parties may have seemed like an obvious decision for state Rep. Paul Froehlich. In 2006, the Schaumburg lawmaker was a Republican who had led local party groups for years. But he watched his veteran colleague, state Rep. Terry Parke, lose to a Democrat and end his 22-year legislative career.

That Democrat was Rep. Fred Crespo of Hoffman Estates. However, Crespo had earlier been elected as a local official with GOP support, including

help from Republican Froehlich. Now Crespo is in the middle of his first term serving a district in the northwest Chicago suburbs that borders Froehlich's.

Those party swaps reflect a trend in the changing Chicago suburbs. Long known for their red-state Republican politics, these districts have been steeped in blue by demographic shifts.

U.S. Census numbers show that in Schaumburg, part of which Crespo represents, nearly 1,000 Latinos and

1,000 African Americans moved in between 2000 and 2006. In that time, the village's total population went up by about 2,000 people, according to the American Community Survey.

Forty percent of Froehlich's district voted for Democrat Rod Blagojevich for governor in 2002, but it gave 49 percent to U.S. Sen. John Kerry in 2004 — hardly Republican stronghold numbers.

The area is becoming a purple haze, and a challenge to Republican incumbents. While Illinois House Republicans lost

Photograph by Mike Weir, courtesy of the office of the House Speaker



Former Republican state Rep. Paul Froehlich is running for re-election as a Democrat.

only one incumbent in the 2006 elections, the Senate lost five — four from the Chicago suburbs.

As a Republican, Froehlich would be reasonable to wonder: Am I next?

He switched political parties and became a Democrat in June 2007. He says because Democrats have strong majorities in the Illinois House and the Senate, he can get more done as a member of the majority party.

“I mean, for the first time after I switched, I was able to get a meeting with the governor,” the Cook County resident says. “I think the potential there is to get more done because you’re in the same party as the people who run my county and control state government.”

While Froehlich’s district may be evolving, he enters the party at a peculiar time. The reputation of Democrats throughout this blue state may have been beaten black and blue by its own top leaders.

Polls suggest that Democratic Gov. Blagojevich’s approval ratings sank after the summer when he and top lawmakers spent months in unprecedented and well-publicized gridlock. Lawmakers left Springfield after accomplishing little more than approving their own pay raises.

Instead of capitalizing on Democratic trends in one of the country’s bluest states, Froehlich now faces an opponent in the primary election next month. If Froehlich survives that, he’ll likely face a well-funded Republican who could try to tie him to months of Democratic bungling.

But his party does have a substantial advantage of 67 Democrats to 51 Republicans in the House, and the state’s legislative boundaries were drawn to protect incumbents.

In addition, several House Republicans plan to retire or seek other offices, possibly sparking up-for-grabs campaigns that will draw the attention and the funding of both political parties. Among the retirees are GOP Reps. Bill Black of Danville, Joseph Dunn of Naperville, Patricia Lindner of Aurora and James Meyer of Bolingbrook. Rep. Aaron Schock of Peoria is leaving his state office in hopes of replacing Republican U.S. Rep. Ray LaHood in Congress.

The challenge for the GOP appears nearly insurmountable in the Senate.

KEY LEGISLATIVE RACES

In some cases, Democrats and Republicans are likely to target vacated seats for victory because there’s no incumbent who has the advantage of name recognition. Here’s a list of the legislators who announced their retirements and the candidates trying to replace them:

HOUSE

32nd District Retiring **Milton “Milt” Patterson**, a Chicago Democrat; possible replacements: Democrats **Bobby Joe Johnson**, **Lawrence “Anton” Seals Jr.**, **Sean Smith** and **Yvette Williams**, all of Chicago

40th District Running for state Senate **Rich Bradley**, a Chicago Democrat; possible replacement: Democrat **Deborah Mell** of Chicago

48th District Retiring **Jim Meyer**, a Bolingbrook Republican; possible replacements: Republicans **Dave Carlin** of Naperville, **Michael Connelly** of Lisle and **Douglas Krause** of Naperville

50th District Retiring **Patricia Reid Lindner**, an Aurora Republican; possible replacements: Democrat **Mary Schneider** of Batavia and Republicans **Anton Graff** of Yorkville, **Kay Hatcher** of Yorkville, **Terry Hunt** of Big Rock and **David Richmond** of Batavia

66th District Retiring **Carolyn Krause**, a Mount Prospect Republican; possible replacements: Democrat **Mark Walker** of Arlington Heights and Republicans **Laura Bartell** of Arlington Heights and **Christine Prochno** of Elk Grove Village

92nd District Running for Congress **Aaron Schock**, a Peoria Republican; possible replacements: Democrats **Allen Mayer** of Peoria and **Jehan Gordon** of Peoria and Republican **Cindy Ardis Jenkins** of Peoria

96th District Retiring **Joseph Dunn**, a Naperville Republican; possible replacements: Democrat **Dianne McGuire** of Naperville and Republicans **Michael Bolwer** of Aurora and **Darlene Senger** of Naperville

104th District Retiring **Bill Black**, a Danville Republican; possible replacements: Republicans **Terry Baldwin** of Danville and **Scott Eisenhower** of Danville

107th District Retiring **Kurt Granberg**, a Carlyle Democrat who hopes to join the Blagojevich Administration; possible replacements: Democrats **Patti Hahn** of Centralia, **Travis Loyd** of Mt. Vernon and Republican **John Cavaletto** of Salem

SENATE

7th District Retiring **Carol Ronen**, a Chicago Democrat joining the Blagojevich Administration; possible replacements: Democrats **Heather Steans** of Chicago and **Suzanne Elder** of Chicago

26th District Retiring **William Peterson**, a Long Grove Republican; possible replacements: Democrats **Bill Gentes** of Round Lake and **Richard Hammes** of North Barrington and Republican **Dan Duffy** of Lake Barrington

45th District Retiring **Todd Sieben**, a Geneseo Republican; possible replacements: Democrat **Marty Mulcahey** of Galena and Republican **Tim Bivins** of Dixon

Note: The State Board of Elections had until December 6 to certify ballots for counties. Because Illinois Issues went to press before that date, some candidates we identify may not appear on the ballot.



State Rep. Fred Crespo of Hoffman Estates gave up past Republican support to run as a Democrat for the legislature.

Democrats in that chamber hold a strong 37-22 advantage. That gives them enough votes — if they stick together — for a three-fifths supermajority to override the governor's vetoes or approve major spending plans without GOP support.

While Senate Democrats could struggle to build on their majority, Republicans' daunting task includes the retirements of Republican Sens. Todd Sieben of Geneseo and William Peterson of Long Grove.

Going into the 2008 race, experts and lawmakers say the GOP's best chance to make up for past weaknesses is to tie their opponents to Blagojevich and his recent unpopularity.

Democrats might be wise to stick with the strategy that granted them statewide control in the first place — defending their majority and making occasional inroads when opportunity beckons.

The 2008 Republican strategy may mirror one that was used against them in the national races for Congress just two years earlier. The mounting frustration over American deaths in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan drove many voters to oust the congressional leadership. In 2006, Democrats rode that tidal wave for the party nationally, sweeping

Republicans from control. With well-funded polls backing them, Democrats across the country employed similar strategies: No matter how moderate or independent the Republican opponent, use mailers, broadcast ads — whatever means — to get the opponent's name in the same sentence with President George W. Bush, who has sagging approval ratings.

Illinois' current political atmosphere could generate similar voter discontent, opening the door for the state GOP. Blagojevich's reputation began to dip when, in early 2007, he proposed one of the largest tax increases in state history, while Democrats struggled to assuage outrage over rising electric bills.

Residents in longtime state Rep. Kurt Granberg's territory felt the heat. The 107th District encompasses a swath of southern Illinois that he says has been hard hit by a dearth of economic development and job opportunities. The rising cost of gas and electricity has left many of the residents struggling to pay bills.

Granberg chose not to stick around to ride out Republican criticism. He recently announced he won't run for re-election and is expecting an appointment in the Blagojevich

Administration. But before choosing not to file for re-election, he anticipated a brutal campaign.

"My name will be Kurt Blagojevich, and I will love illegal immigrants," he said before bowing out.

That prediction also could foreshadow trouble Democrats might get from their Republican opponents over a highly controversial proposal to let undocumented immigrants get driving certificates. The measure failed, but 60 lawmakers are on record as supporting the effort.

Granberg voted to support the measure, a reflection of how he differs from political leanings in the area. He served in the House for 20 years despite being surrounded by districts represented by Republicans. In 2004, his district voted about 58 percent in favor of Bush.

The 2006 election gave Granberg a scare. He won by fewer than 200 votes, but not before spending more than \$1.1 million during the cycle, according to the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, a nonpartisan research and advocacy group based in Chicago.

His Republican opponent, John Cavaletto, spent a whopping \$775,000 and plans to run again. Cavaletto partly blames his 2006 loss on the



Anita Forte-Scott, at left, says she rejected Democrats' offer to join their party.

Democratic momentum that swept the country. He also lost in 2002 and says the federal corruption conviction of former Gov. George Ryan, a Republican, hurt him then.

"I think it's about time your own party stopped beating you," Cavaletto says.

He says he's hoping the third time is the charm, while realizing that it could be three strikes and you're out. Two Democrats will try to take on Cavaletto to succeed Granberg.

John Jackson, an analyst with the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University, says the time is now for the GOP to capitalize on voter apathy about the state's Democrats.

"The Democrats have been given their chance," he says.

Despite the party's bruised reputation, some say it's still possible Illinois Democrats could catch a second wind. They have another chance with the 2008 legislative session leading up to Election Day.

That chance rests with a long-awaited capital bill, which would allocate billions of dollars for new roads, bridges, schools, prisons and universities — and give Democrats an added political boost.

Big construction projects mean lots of ribbon cuttings and positive local

press. Ribbon cuttings also mean jobs. And jobs for laborers could mean campaign contributions from the unions that bolster Democratic campaign coffers across the state.

Despite Blagojevich's push for health care and Senate President Emil Jones Jr.'s emphasis on education reform, the capital bill moved into the spotlight this year, at least in part because an interstate bridge collapsed in Minnesota and sparked reports of poor bridge quality in Illinois.

But like most other spending plans launched by legislators in 2007, there was widespread disagreement about how to pay for it. Lawmakers would have to sign off on a large gambling plan to pay for the Blagojevich-Jones construction proposal.

At the same time, incumbents from both parties likely love the idea of bringing home the bacon in an election year.

Even without a capital bill, however, a Republican takeover of Illinois in 2008 probably faces long odds, Jackson says.

Along the Illinois River, state Rep. Schock's vacated seat could be an attractive one for Illinois Democrats.

The 92nd District includes Peoria and

is home to the blue-collar city's legion of manufacturing workers. Those workers, and the minority groups who live in one of downstate's biggest metropolitan areas, lean Democratic. In the 2004 presidential election, 60 percent of the voters in the district cast a "yes" vote for Democrat Kerry.

Schock is leaving the Illinois House in an attempt to replace LaHood in Congress.

In 2004, Schock upset Democrat Ricca Slone to win his state seat. He spent \$650,000 on that bid, according to records of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform. Slone spent more, nearly \$900,000. Still, Schock prevailed. But he expects a difficult and expensive race to replace him in the Illinois House.

"I don't think that it will be the walk in the park that some suggest," Schock says. He adds that while it's not impossible for a Republican to win again, the nominee will have to reach out to such groups as African Americans and labor unions that are typically courted by Democrats but supported Schock.

"They like the fact that I work hard and am responsive to them," he says.

Lining up for the seat is Republican Cindy Ardis-Jenkins, who has worked for Schock and is the sister of Peoria



John Cavaletto will face two Democrats in his bid to win the seat being vacated by state Rep. Kurt Granberg.

Mayor Jim Ardis. On the Democratic side, Peoria County Board member Allen Mayer and Illinois Central College diversity coordinator Jehan Gordon have announced bids.

In the northwest suburbs of Chicago, Froehlich, the Republican-turned-Democrat, has to worry about his primary opponent, Democrat John Moynihan, before he can think about a Republican opponent in November.

Hoffman Estates library board member Anita Forte-Scott, who faces a primary challenge herself from Schaumburg Republican Charlotte Kegarise, is hoping to put the district back in the hands of Republicans. And though Froehlich has only been a Democrat for a matter of months, Forte-Scott says it doesn't make any sense to keep adding to the Democratic difficulties by re-electing another one.

"I would put him in that category as far back as [last] year," she says.

She says she plans to target Froehlich's vote for the immigrant driving proposal.

Just next door, Crespo voted "no" on that controversial plan to let immigrants get driver's certificates. Crespo faces Schaumburg school board member and Republican Peggy Brothman.

Brothman says she was asked by

Democrats more than a year ago to switch parties and follow Crespo's path.

"Democrats asked me," she says. "I chose not to change parties because I think that's confusing to voters."

In facing re-election, Crespo says his biggest concern isn't being tied to the Democratic missteps of 2007. Rather, he says, the long legislative battles kept him from helping — and getting face-time — with his constituents. "It's unfortunate we've spent so much time in Springfield this year," he said in November.

Republicans and Democrats struggled throughout the 2007 legislative session. Because Froehlich was in both corners of the ring in that time, he can expect unique challenges in the 2008 election season.

While dozens of other lawmakers will go unchallenged for their seats, Froehlich, at least partly because of his party swap, is one of the few who can expect tough races in both the February primary and the November general election.

"Anytime you have an opponent that's going to have lots of money and resources," he says, "it's a real challenge."

The pool of voters who could be swayed to vote for someone of a different

political party is limited, says Jackson. In his recent study, *Party Competition in Illinois: Republican Prospects in a Blue State*, he suggests that loyalties are strong with both parties, leaving few votes up for grabs.

In addition, most lawmakers will run for re-election in 2008 either unopposed or challenged by candidates who lack the campaign cash to put up a good fight.

For that reason, both parties likely will focus millions of dollars and dozens of staff members on a handful of races. House Speaker Michael Madigan and House Republican Leader Tom Cross, who are considered safe in their re-election bids, will pick their battles and direct the campaign cash into more vulnerable districts throughout the state.

"The leaders don't really necessarily have to worry about their next re-election, but they do have to worry about maintaining their majority or keeping their majority or building on a majority," state Comptroller Dan Hynes said at an October meeting. "And that'll be difficult for the Democrats to do if a year from now they can't say, 'We deserve to be in power.'" □

Mike Riopell is a Statehouse reporter for Lee Enterprises.

Keep them separated?

A constitutional convention could offer a chance to take a new look at how job duties are delegated between the executive and legislative branches

Essay by Brian J. Gaines

The legislative, executive and judicial branches are separate. No branch shall exercise powers properly belonging to another.

So reads the Illinois Constitution. The clause makes explicit a principle underlying American governments, federal and state. The tripartite conception of state functions was no novelty, but expressly separating them was a distinct innovation when the American Founders re-engineered the British institutions they had inherited through colonialism.

But just how inviolable is this separation? The clause above omits a phrase found in its 1870 predecessor: “belonging to either of the others *except as hereinafter expressly directed or permitted*” (Article III, emphasis added). Does the brevity of the newer passage suggest that there are no longer any exceptions to purely separated branches of government exercising wholly distinct powers? By no means.

Establishing separately constituted branches is easy, but parceling out the powers of government amongst them is devilishly tricky. Controversies abound. Do prosecutors encroach on the judiciary? What about gubernatorial clemency? Who makes tort law — courts or the legislature? Can courts order state’s attorneys to take given actions? Does legislation that delegates discretionary authority to bureaucracy represent impermissible shirking?

The inspiration for looking at executive-legislative separation, or lack thereof, is the possibility that Illinois could soon be in constitution-drafting mode. In November 2008, the state’s voters will decide whether

to initiate a new constitutional convention. Many separation-of-powers issues could loom large in a new convention. Consider instances of gubernatorial power that seem to encroach, to some degree, on legislative prerogatives. One way to deal with them is a radical option: dispensing with the separation of executive and legislative powers altogether.

The Constitution permits the governor “to convene the General Assembly or the Senate alone in special session by a proclamation stating the purpose of the session.” Perhaps this is no usurpation of powers — a governor empowered to instruct legislators to meet and consider X does not necessarily get his way on X.

Photograph courtesy of the office of House Speaker Michael Madigan



House Speaker Michael Madigan

The power is commonplace in American states, possibly in imitation of the federal model, since the American president can convene Congress for special sessions “on extraordinary occasions.”

Still, this power has become controversial in Illinois of late. Gov. Rod Blagojevich even launched a lawsuit against House Speaker Michael Madigan for not conforming exactly to the time specified by the governor for a special session, and for not ensuring that a quorum be present. Most editorial commentary has been critical, if not scathing, of the governor’s action, and Madigan countered that Blagojevich has used the power to call special sessions about as often in five years as his five predecessors did in roughly 30 years.

Madigan’s formal reply emphasized both the seemingly capricious nature of Blagojevich’s session-calling, and the affront to separated powers inherent in the actions. “In an unprecedented misuse of executive authority, the Governor has called the General Assembly into repeated, overlapping special sessions ... often on only a few hours’ notice or less, and deliberately choosing inconvenient times ... all for the apparent purpose of ... punishing lawmakers who refused to pass his preferred legislation.”

Since the Illinois Constitution permits legislative leaders to call special sessions, it is not clear why a parallel gubernatorial power is necessary. The power is of limited value, in any case, assuming that courts will rule, in line with precedent, that governors cannot force individual legislators to attend sessions. In that light, special sessions appear to be of mainly symbolic

A literalist might object that requiring the chief executive to sign off on legislation at all is a violation of separation of powers.



Gov. Rod Blagojevich

value. Governors cannot force legislators to legislate; indeed, they cannot even constrain the legislature to deliberate.

Blagojevich has taken much heat for overusing this power, but he has in fact complied with current constitutional language. If the situation today seems farcical, and if this authority seems pointless, the easiest and tidiest constitutional revision would be to embrace separation by removing the governor's ability to call sessions. A governor eager to exert pressure on the General Assembly could still, of course, make public pronouncements and pleas. But because the "Go to Springfield" card is of limited scope, taking it out of the governor's deck would surely not shift powers drastically. Neither would it leave the state in a condition of paralysis in the event of a genuine emergency.

Surprisingly, the lawsuit over special sessions is not unique. Earlier this year, a separate suit by the governor against the House clerk was dismissed. That suit originated in a clash over the governor's veto of the much-delayed state budget. The governor alleged that the Constitution required the clerk to enter the governor's veto message into the House Journal at the first opportunity. By not taking legal action against the Senate, which also had failed promptly to enroll his veto, Blagojevich lent credence to the

view that bitter personal rivalry, rather than a desire for strict adherence to constitutionality, explained the suit.

Timing is a significant matter, in turn, because the Illinois Constitution dictates time limits for the shuttling of bills between the General Assembly and the governor. Madigan preferred not to start the clock on Blagojevich's veto in order to buy time for hearings that could potentially win over the court of public opinion by emphasizing the importance to various groups of the programs Blagojevich had cut.

A literalist might object that requiring the chief executive to sign off on legislation at all is a violation of separation of powers. If the names are any guide, the legislature makes laws, while the executive branch administers and enforces them.

How is it "execution" to take part in passage? Nevertheless, it is another universal feature of American government that chief executives (governors and the president) normally must consent to new laws, and can be bypassed only by very large majorities in overrides of vetoes. The word "veto" does not appear in the federal Constitution, but Article I, which sets forth the structure of lawmaking, grants the president a major role. In many states, governors have even greater scope to participate in the legislative process, as they can veto not only bills in their

entirety, but sections of bills and individual appropriation items.

Illinois is undoubtedly in the top third of the U.S. states in terms of the extent of the governor's lawmaking power. For instance, the governor's amendatory vetoes can be approved by bare majority, but overridden only by supermajorities.

That the governor of Illinois enjoys some substantial powers in the legislative process is not in doubt, but Blagojevich has been accused of stretching this influence past the breaking point. Few took seriously the governor's explanation that his vetoes were acts of prudence, since the \$500 million in cuts was transparently concentrated in districts of his foes. Rich Miller, Springfield political blogger, pulled no punches, calling it "the most blatantly political budgetary veto in Illinois history." To use the veto pen as a political sword is perhaps unwise, but surely not unconstitutional. However, Blagojevich simultaneously announced that he intended to increase spending on his preferred project — expanding health insurance coverage for the uninsured — by precisely the amount he had "saved" with vetoes. Whether a governor — any governor — can use executive rule-making authority to increase budgetary allocations to existing organizations to create, in effect, wholly new programs without any legislative authorization remains in doubt. His argument, in its strongest form, would



Senate President Emil Jones Jr.

amount to a new gubernatorial power to appropriate, bypassing the legislature altogether (see “Booster Shot?” *Illinois Issues*, October, page 18).

What should constitutional drafters make of the amendatory veto? The verdict should certainly not be based strictly on one’s reaction to the current ballyhoo. Some who doubt the legality of Blagojevich’s maneuver would nonetheless support the veto. Reformers have for years agitated for a federal line-item veto, arguing that spending is restrained in states where governors can undo some of the logrolling that, notoriously, generates bloated legislative budgets.

The answer from the point of view of a separation-of-powers purist is surely the less the executive interferes with legislative responsibilities the better. But unlike the special-sessions power, the veto is unarguably important beyond symbolism. In general, the cases for and against strong gubernatorial powers rest on the degree to which one wishes to increase the number of powerful actors whose preferences are at play in legislating. All those whose ideal is dispersed authority, rather than separation of powers, should applaud strong veto powers. Illinois is already near the high end of the spectrum in American experience, so a revision expanding veto provisions would seem unlikely. On the other hand, the line-item veto need not include amending power.

The options for restricting it, without wiping it out, are evident in other states.

The 2002 election saw a Democratic sweep in Illinois, as the party retained control of the House, gained the Senate, and, for the first time in 26 years, took the governorship. The state has since experienced nearly five years of “unified” Democratic government. Those quotation marks are necessary, however, because there has been precious little unity amongst the three major figures in state government. In a gargantuan clash of personalities, Gov. Blagojevich and Speaker Madigan have feuded constantly and openly. Sen. President Emil Jones Jr. has mainly sided with the governor, at some cost to caucus unity and with a predictable chilling of House-Senate relations.

Conflict is not always lamentable, and it should not be stunning that internecine wars sometimes take place within parties, particularly parties whose leaders feel secure in power. Epic struggles between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton revealed, at the nation’s dawn, that factions are inevitable. Fans of dispersion of authority do not object to stalemates — they are an intended byproduct of separating powers across roughly equally strong branches.

But Illinois government has, under

unified Democratic control, seemed positively dysfunctional. For observers concerned that the desire for good policy has receded as the feud has intensified, what is the ultimate constitutional remedy? One answer is to discard separation of powers as a normative standard. One can avoid a clash of titans by having only one titan. Consider not merely striking out Section 1 of Article II, but thoroughly rewriting Articles IV and V to adopt parliamentary government. Illinois could return to the original British example by making its chief executive the legislative leader whose party holds the most seats.

To embed the executive within the legislature might seem dangerously radical to American eyes, but it is, in fact, the world’s most popular democratic form. The example due north in the Canadian provinces should be reassuring. Americans are justly proud of their long history of peaceful self-government, but Canadians have enjoyed a similar blessing without separated powers.

Illinois already has strong party leaders who, by American standards, exert unusually high levels of control over campaign spending and who command abnormally high levels of party-line voting. These are hallmarks of parliamentary systems already in place. For observers seriously frustrated with gridlock and stalemate, unifying powers should appeal. Parliamentary governments come in many forms, so other choices over how much to concentrate authority would arise. (For instance, Canadian provinces are unicameral, but most Australian states are bicameral.)

To raise the prospect of fundamentally altering the state’s constitutional structure in reaction to a few years of poisonous political infighting might seem extreme, even absurd. But the ultimate question is whether separation of powers is a first principle of good government, or merely one constitutional option of many, embraced at considerable cost and with uncertain benefits. James Madison might spin in his grave, but if the Illinois Constitution is to be revised, all options should be on the table. □

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Up for grabs

Democrats want to build the majority in their congressional delegation, while Republicans aim to shift the balance

by Aaron Chambers

Illinois will be a battleground in 2008 as Democrats fight to keep their newfound majority in the U.S. House, and Republicans fight to win it back.

Democrats hope the increasingly blue nature of Illinois, coupled with another pro-Democrat nationwide wave, will put their candidates in another four of this state's 19 congressional seats. The Republicans want to keep those seats, of course, while winning back a northwest suburban seat they lost in 2004. The stakes are especially high for the Illinois GOP: Three of its incumbent congressmen — J. Dennis Hastert of Plano, Ray LaHood of Peoria and Jerry Weller of Morris — are retiring, leaving those seats open.

But congressional candidates set to compete in the November 4 general election must first survive the February 5 primary election. And on that near-term front, several are braced for major battles.

Hot primaries are shaping up in the northwest suburban 8th District held by Democratic Rep. Melissa Bean of Barrington, the north suburban 10th District held by Republican Rep. Mark Kirk of Highland Park, the far west suburban 14th District held by retiring Hastert and the central Illinois 18th District held by retiring LaHood.

There are notable congressional primaries elsewhere in Illinois, too. Democrats are competing for the chance to face Republican Rep. Peter Roskam of Wheaton in the west suburban 6th District. Republicans are vying to succeed retiring Weller in the 11th District, which stretches

from the far southwest suburbs south to Bloomington. And Rep. Daniel Lipinski of Western Springs faces opposition from multiple fellow Democrats in the 3rd District, which runs through Chicago's Southwest Side and southwest suburbs.

Come November, the outcomes in these primary races will help determine whether Democrats keep, gain or lose ground in Congress. The Democrats have a 233-202 edge in the House, thanks to their 2006 sweep. Republicans would like to play offense, but they have precious few dollars to spread around to targeted races. The National Republican Congressional Committee had just \$1.6 million on hand, with a \$3.85 million debt, on September 30, the last campaign finance disclosure date. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee had \$28.3 million on hand, with a \$3 million debt.

Democrats hold 10 of this state's 19 congressional seats. Republicans hold the other nine.

The 14th District held by Hastert may be the most contentious nominating contest among Republicans, or at least the most outwardly hostile. Hopefuls include perennial candidate Jim Oberweis, the ice cream magnate from Sugar Grove, and state Sen. Chris Lauzen of Aurora. Geneva Mayor Kevin Burns also is running. Michael Dilger from Evanston — some 10 municipalities beyond the district's eastern edge — filed petitions to run, too.

The two leading candidates diverge in style as much as in substance. Lauzen is a

soft-spoken accountant enamored of fiscal nuance. Oberweis is a savvy businessman and brash showman quick with rhetorical lightning rods. Lauzen stresses the quality of constituent service he provided for 15 years as a state legislator, saying he returned every constituent letter, phone call and e-mail he received during that time. Oberweis says Lauzen ought to be disqualified from serving in Congress by virtue of his service in Springfield, where public corruption pervades.

"Unfortunately, one of my opponents has been a part of the Ryan/Blagojevich Springfield culture for 15 years," Oberweis says, referring to the current and past governors. "I think that's a terrible negative."

Lauzen notes he was constantly at odds with establishment Democrats and Republicans in Illinois. He says he once returned a \$10,000 donation from former Gov. George Ryan, who had scolded him for not voting with the administration despite the contribution Ryan made to Lauzen's campaign fund.

"I'm the guy who has demonstrated his independence from his own party," Lauzen says.

Lauzen went to the state Senate in 1993 as part of a group of conservatives dubbed the "Fab Five." The others were Peter Fitzgerald, Patrick O'Malley, Steve Rauschenberger and Dave Syverson. Though the others have moved on, Syverson, of Rockford, also remains in the state Senate. Lauzen ran for state comptroller in 1998, losing to

Democrat Dan Hynes, who still holds the post.

Oberweis also slams Lauzen for hiring Kane County GOP Chairman Denny Wiggins as a paid campaign adviser, saying Lauzen “bought” an endorsement from the local party leader. Wiggins took leave from his party post to serve the Lauzen campaign. He responds that Oberweis ran against him for Kane County GOP chairman in 2006 — and lost. Lauzen says Oberweis tried to hire Wiggins as an adviser to his own campaign.

“Obviously, there’s still sour grapes,” Lauzen says.

This is Oberweis’ fourth run for office in as many election cycles. He lost Republican primaries for U.S. Senate in 2002 and 2004 and for governor in 2006. Just as he did in his previous races, Oberweis is again making his quest to curb illegal immigration his campaign centerpiece.

In his 2004 campaign for Senate, Oberweis ran a television commercial depicting himself in a helicopter hovering above Soldier Field. Over the buzz of the chopper’s engine, he shouted, “Illegal aliens are coming here to take American workers’ jobs, drive down wages and take advantage of government benefits such as free health care. And you pay. How many? Ten thousand illegal aliens a day. Enough to fill Soldier Field every single week.”

Oberweis now concedes the ad was “a little too harsh and it didn’t really clearly communicate our position on the issue.” Still, he says, “I believe the population has caught up with my view.”

“Nobody wanted to hear about the issue at that time,” he says of illegal immigration. “Today, it’s on everybody’s mind.”

Oberweis says America must secure its borders by building a fence, beefing up border patrols and improving tracking of individuals coming and going from the nation. Asked whether there must be a fence along the Canadian border as well as the Mexican border, Oberweis responds, “Look, I think we need the fence wherever we have the problem.”

Lauzen is known in Springfield for fiscal and social conservatism. He consistently complains publicly about the state’s budget mismanagement. He says his priorities in Congress would boil down to “faith, family and the fruits of freedom.”

“My commitment to the people who are going to be making the decision on February 5 is the same commitment that I

Retiring incumbents, new contestants



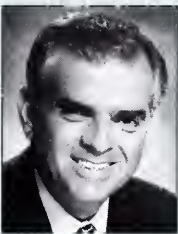
J. Dennis Hastert,
Republican of Plano — *14th District*

DEMOCRATS

Fermilab scientist **Bill Foster** of Geneva
Carpenter **John Laesch** of Yorkville
Business owner **Joe Serra** of Geneva
Attorney **Jotham Stein** of St. Charles

REPUBLICANS

Geneva Mayor **Kevin Burns**
Michael Dilger of Evanston
State Sen. **Chris Lauzen** of Aurora
Dairy magnate **Jim Oberweis** of Sugar Grove



Ray LaHood,
Republican of Peoria — *18th District*

DEMOCRAT

Former NBA coach **Dick Versace** of Peoria

REPUBLICANS

Economic development leader **Jim McConoughey** of Dunlap
Former Peoria council member **John Morris**
State Rep. **Aaron Schock** of Peoria



Jerry Weller,
Republican of Morris — *11th District*

DEMOCRAT

State Sen. **Debbie Halvorson** of Crete

REPUBLICANS

New Lenox Mayor **Timothy Baldermann**
Airline pilot **Terry Heenan** of New Lenox
Former White House staffer **Jimmy Lee** of North Utica

GREEN

Jason Wallace of Normal

3rd District



Incumbent
Daniel Lipinski,
Democrat
of Western Springs

DEMOCRATS

Jerry Bennett of Palos Hills
Jim Capparelli of Chicago
Mark Pera of Western Springs

REPUBLICANS

Arthur Jones of Chicago
Michael Hawkins of Bridgeview

GREENS

Richard Mayers of Berwyn
Jerome Pohlen of Berwyn

made when I first ran 16 years ago. I didn't promise anybody a road through their town or a cushy contract or a government job," he says. "The three promises were to work hard, stay honest, use common sense."

He supports an overhaul of the nation's health care system, including incentives to end employer-sponsored insurance. He argues the current system drives down wages and consumers should have the option of getting insurance elsewhere, perhaps from a trade association or religious organization. He also hopes to encourage the use of health savings accounts and preventive medicine.

Oberweis supports a similar plan to discourage employer-sponsored programs and encourage individuals to manage their own health care. He says tax-free health savings accounts, in which individuals save for future medical benefits, is one way to accomplish this. Both men advocate reduced federal spending and lower taxes.

Both Oberweis and Lauzen hail from the GOP's right wing. Jack Roeser, the ultraconservative president of the Family Taxpayers Network, has alternately backed each of them over the years. Burns, the third Republican candidate, hopes vot-

ers will note this: He says he's the "only moderate candidate" in the GOP race.

"This district, the way it has shifted demographically, calls for a more moderate, reasonable approach to our issues and our problems," he says. "That's not to say we need to become more Democratic in order to win or succeed."

Burns says his record as Geneva mayor stands as a model of how he would perform as a member of Congress. He promotes increased use of renewable energy, incentives to allow individuals to control their own health care decisions, and empowering state and local governments with the "tools" to fight illegal immigration.

"I have done what the Republican Party is looking for," he says. "I have lowered taxes. I have shrunk the size of government. I have improved communications between the private sector and public sector. I have secured immediate and long-term energy needs for my community and clean water-resource needs. I have improved relationships with the local, state and national levels."

Lauzen led the Republicans in fundraising at the end of September with \$528,583 on hand. Oberweis had \$178,905, while Burns had \$51,266.

Democrats also are hoping to win this seat, and a November win for them would be something of a trophy. Hastert, a former high school teacher and wrestling coach, was the longest serving GOP House speaker and hailed from a traditionally Republican district. He was first elected to Congress in 1986, becoming speaker in 1999 after Newt Gingrich resigned. Hastert was replaced as speaker when Republicans lost their majority in the 2006 election. He announced he would retire prior to the end of his term in January 2009, triggering a special election for his congressional seat.

The district runs from Elgin, St. Charles, West Chicago and Batavia to

Aurora, taking in Kane and Kendall counties and much of DeKalb County, and west through northern Illinois to Geneseo, near the Quad Cities. Hastert won 59.8 percent of the vote in 2006, while Democrat John Laesch won 40.2 percent. President George W. Bush won 55 percent of the vote in 2004, compared to Democrat John Kerry's 44 percent.

Democratic candidates include Fermilab scientist Bill Foster of Geneva and St. Charles lawyer Jotham Stein. Yorkville's Laesch, who is making another attempt at winning the district seat, and small business owner Joe Serra of Geneva also are in the race. Naturally, the Democrats say they're confident the district is ready to embrace one of them. "An early poll in the district is showing a generic Democrat defeating a generic Republican 40 to 30," says Stein, a former law school lecturer now in private practice.

Laesch, a carpenter and former navel intelligence officer, believes three factors bode well for a Democratic general election victory: the changing demographics in the east-suburban side of the district, the growing strength of local Democratic organizations and the continuing presidency of George W. Bush.

"As long as he is in office, we can continue to expect him to stay the course in Iraq and do the will of corporations instead of people," he says.

Foster, also an entrepreneur and the establishment candidate in this race, agrees national fatigue with Bush and his Republican allies may help propel a Democrat into the 14th District seat. "The whole nation is very unhappy with the way George Bush and the Republicans have been leading our country," he says.

Stein has a "10-point plan to fix global warming," including tax breaks for buying fuel-efficient vehicles and using alternative energy sources. He advocates a federal law requiring the government to provide food and health care to every child who lacks either. He also supports universal health care for adults.

Foster believes the key to immigration reform is "an electronically verifiable tamper-proof worker identification card." He says it's unclear whether every worker in America would have such a card, though he insists it would not be akin to a national ID. On health care, he says the government must encourage greater

use of information technology — such as electronic patient records, hospital information systems and community health information networks — to minimize medical errors and reduce costs.

Foster boasts the endorsement of 22 Nobel Prize winners. “The eastern part of the district now understands its future is connected to high-tech industry, and the western part is connected to the future of biofuels,” he says. “At either end, they understand that the problems and challenges they will face are economic and technological. As a businessman, I can answer the concerns that they have.”

Stein, who specializes in business and employment law, says, “I have lots of experience with jobs and entrepreneurs and venture capitalists, and bringing the kinds of jobs we need to this district.”

All three men say the nation must withdraw its troops from Iraq. Laesch, who spent three years living in and studying the Middle East, primarily Iran, goes a step further in saying he opposes any pre-emptive strike in Iran. Foster and Stein do not rule out such an attack, depending on intelligence.

Laesch is jockeying for the far left side of the primary field. He says intraparty conflict between liberal “progressive” and conservative “blue dog” Democrats may play out in the 14th District’s Democratic primary, just as in Washington, D.C. He has written several posts for *dailykos.com*, the nation’s premier blog for liberal Democrats. He supports a single-payer, publicly financed national health care plan.

Foster was well ahead of his opponents in fundraising. He had \$407,331 on hand at the end of September, compared to Stein’s \$60,928 and Laesch’s \$4,938.

In the 10th District, the demographics and political dynamics of the primary races mirror the 8th District. Republican Kirk represents a district leaning Democratic. Democrat Bean holds a seat that was held for a generation by a Republican. The Democrats hoping to unseat Kirk cast the incumbent as too close to Bush, just as the Republicans hoping to oust Bean paint her as too liberal.

But even as the Democrats hoping to succeed Kirk try to paint him as a hawk, they’re careful to avoid painting themselves as too far left.

“Much was said in the last election about soccer moms becoming security moms, and I think that’s true,” says Democrat Jay Footlik, a former White House adviser who worked part-time in the Middle East. “And I think people look to their public officials and would-be public officials for the kind of experience that makes us more secure and makes us safer at home.”

The 10th District stretches along the lake shore from Waukegan through Lake Forest and Highland Park to Winnetka, Kenilworth and Wilmette, and west into Libertyville, Vernon Hills, Buffalo Grove, Arlington Heights, Northbrook and Glenview. Kirk has held the seat since 2001, when he succeeded Republican John Porter. He won a comfortable 53.38 percent of the vote in 2006, while Democrat Daniel Seals won 46.62 percent. Kerry took 51 percent of the district’s vote in 2004, to Bush’s 48 percent.

Seals, a business consultant and former GE Capital executive from Wilmette, is trying again to oust Kirk, but he must first contend with Buffalo Grove’s Footlik. David Kalbfleisch, a Green Party candidate from Arlington Heights, also is running.

“I think my primary opponent is a good guy and a good man who ran a good race,” Footlik says, referring to Seals’ first run in 2006, “but he came up short in the best Democratic year in four decades in a solidly Democratic state in a solidly Democratic district.”

Seals responds, “The biggest difference between he and I is that I’ve already demonstrated that I’m not just right on the issues, but also I’m able to draw support from independents and Republicans as well. The folks that are supporting us are already and continue to be supporters.”

Both the Democrats are focused on casting themselves as the necessary alternative to Kirk on points such as the war in Iraq and health care. Seals says America must remove its troops from Iraq in a “responsible” fashion, while Footlik says troop removal must occur “safely and responsibly.”

Both say they would have voted to expand the health care program known as SCHIP, which complements Medicaid. Kirk voted for the expansion, which proponents said would add another 5 million children to the rolls.

Both candidates are well-funded: Seals had \$498,872 on hand at the end of September, compared to Footlik’s \$414,018. Seals has support from local heavyweights such as Evanston Democrat Rep. Jan Schakowsky who argue Footlik will only dilute Seals’ strength in a general election battle with Kirk. Footlik has strong ties to the local Jewish community — a substantial constituency in the district. He was President Bill Clinton’s liaison to this community.

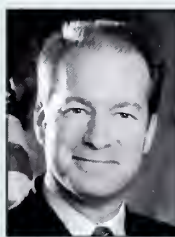
State Sen. Jeff Schoenberg, an Evanston Democrat, complained to *Roll Call* that Footlik threatened to “effectively do Mark Kirk’s work for him in splintering off a traditionally strong segment of the Democratic vote.”

“Jay is unwittingly driving a wedge into some solidly Democratic precincts, which are heavily Jewish, by raising unfounded fears about Dan Seals’ record on Israel,” Schoenberg said, according to *Roll Call*.

Footlik responds, “That’s one person’s view, and he is certainly entitled to it.”

The 8th District, immediately to the west, is more expansive. It reaches from tiny Hebron in northern McHenry County south through Woodstock, McHenry, Wauconda and Lake Zurich to eastern Elgin, east along the state line to Winthrop Harbor and Zion, then southeast into

6th District



Incumbent
Peter Roskam,
Republican
of Wheaton

DEMOCRATS

Stan Jagla of Roselle

Jill Morgenthau of Des Plaines

8th District



Incumbent
Melissa Bean,
Democrat
of Barrington

DEMOCRAT

Randi Scheurer of Lindenhurst

REPUBLICANS

Kenneth Arnold of Gurnee

Steve Greenberg of Long Grove

Kirk Morris of Gurnee

MODERATE

Iain Abernathy of Round Lake Beach

GOP's national committeeman, and from corporate moguls like Charles Walgreen, chairman emeritus of Walgreen Co. Arnold calls himself a "reform" Republican and tags Greenberg as a member of the party's "George Ryan wing." As evidence, he points to a \$1,000 donation that Greenberg accepted from Kjellander, whose business activities are a frequent target of conservative Republicans. "That's a distinct contrast between us — as to who is who and who is supporting who in this race," Arnold says.

Greenberg had \$160,700 on hand at the end of September, to Arnold's \$7,849. Morris had not established a campaign fund by that time.

Bean also is facing Democratic primary challenges from artist Randi Scheurer of Lindenhurst. Iain Abernathy, a Moderate Party candidate from Round Lake Beach, also is running.

In the 18th District, downstate Republicans have lined up for the chance to succeed LaHood and keep the district in their party's corner. The GOP candidates are state Rep. Aaron Schock of Peoria, Jim McConoughey of Dunlap and former Peoria City Council member John Morris. On the Democratic side, Dick Versace, a former Bradley University basketball and NBA coach, is running unopposed.

The 18th District blends urban and rural communities, stretching from Knox, Stark and Putnam counties south through Peoria to Springfield, east over the northern edge of Decatur, and west through Jacksonville to Adams County, just shy of Quincy. LaHood won a whopping 67.28 percent of the vote in 2006, while Democrat Steve Waterworth won just 32.72. Bush won 57 percent of the district's vote in 2004, stomping Kerry's 42 percent.

Schock, a second-term state representative, is the front-runner because of his name recognition. He was first elected to the Peoria School Board at 19, and later defeated an incumbent Democrat in his first run for the Illinois House. He is just

26, one of the state's youngest legislators. "We're ahead in the polls and ahead in the fundraising, but having run against incumbents and beat them, I've always said that overconfidence will kill anyone," Schock says.

He advocates lower taxation, a tougher national stance on immigration and continuing the war in Iraq while pressuring the Iraqi government to stabilize its political climate.

"I believe there is a direct correlation to us fighting the war on terror in their region as opposed to in our home," he says.

In mid-November, Schock waded into foreign policy with a radical stance on a hot topic. He said America could give nuclear weapons to Taiwan, a nation long at odds with neighboring China, which views it as a breakaway province.

"If China continues to be irresponsible about nuclear proliferation in Iran, we should tell them that if they do not care about proliferation — and since they are enablers of it in Iran — that if they don't change their position, we will sell Pershing nuclear missiles to Taiwan for their defense," Schock said in a speech, according to the *Springfield State Journal-Register*.

After Bernard Schoenburg, a *Journal-Register* columnist, reported on the remark, and McConoughey and Morris criticized it, Schock formally retracted the statement.

McConoughey is president and CEO of Heartland Partnership, an economic development group. He is positioning himself as the rural candidate in the pack, saying he would focus on agricultural and other rural initiatives, such as creating additional markets for American farm products abroad while ending inheritance taxes on family-owned farmland.

"I've done most of the work that my opponents are saying they'd like to be able to do in policy," he says. "I've done economic development. I've done infrastructure. I've done federal policy. I wrote a bill that got passed to organize a port authority."

McConoughey, the one candidate in the GOP pack who has not been elected to office, says voters like that he is "not a political insider or professional politician."

"Given the nature of not only our benchmark polling but just being out in the field meeting people, this has been a very high

Gurnee, Grayslake and Mundelein.

Bean won the district seat in 2004 from longtime Republican Rep. Phil Crane. She kept it in 2006, a tremendous year for Democrats nationwide, with just 50.9 percent of the vote. Republican David McSweeney won 44 percent, and "moderate" candidate Bill Scheurer took 5.1 percent. Bush won 55 percent of this district's vote in 2004, compared to Kerry's 44 percent.

"We have a great opportunity to take this seat back," says Steve Greenberg, a Long Grove businessman and former professional hockey player.

Greenberg is facing fellow Republican Kenneth Arnold, a human resources and employee benefits consultant from Gurnee. Arnold ran unsuccessfully in 2006, losing the GOP nomination to McSweeney. Kirk Morris, a Gurnee man who lost his son to the Iraq war, also is in the GOP primary.

Both Greenberg and Arnold tout their business prowess and advocate lower taxes. Arnold pledges to get tough on illegal immigration, while Greenberg says the nation must "stay on offense" in the "terrorists' war."

Greenberg enjoys support from such establishment Republicans as Bob Kjellander, a Springfield lobbyist and the Illinois

positive,” he says. “Not being part of the political system is apparently a very positive feature.”

Morris, the third GOP hopeful, calls himself the “only conservative candidate in the race.” He casts himself as a hawk on the Iraq war, national security and illegal immigration.

“Faith and family are paramount to me,” he says. “I think those are the answers to society’s real issues — not new expenditures of the federal government.”

In touting his own credentials, Morris alludes both to McConoughey’s lack of experience in elected office and Schock’s desire to jump from Springfield to Washington, D.C. “I’m not sure Washington is the place to try things out,” he says. “I’ve got eight years of learning how to get things done, finding solutions and working hard to fight for a conservative outlook on the [city] council. I finished two full terms. I’m not skipping along from job to job.”

Morris also slaps at Schock’s relative youth by emphasizing his own “life perspective.” He says, “I think life experience is important to have. When you go to Washington, D.C., you ought to know yourself.”

Schock responds with his own spin on the words of Ronald Reagan during the 1984 debate. “After four years on the school board and four years in the legislature, if all they can do is make an issue of my age, I’d say I’ve done a pretty good job,” he says. “As Ronald Reagan said, ‘I’m not going to use my age against them.’”

Schock led in fundraising at the end of September, with \$301,239 on hand. Morris had \$197,350 and McConoughey had \$55,300.

Other notable primary contests feature Republicans in the 11th District held by Weller and Democrats in the 6th District held by Roskam. In the 3rd District, U.S. Rep. Daniel Lipinski also is facing multiple Democratic challengers.

In the 11th District, Republican candidates include New Lenox Mayor Tim Baldermann, Jimmy Lee, a former White House staffer from North Utica, and airline pilot Terry Heenan, a New Lenox Republican.

They will square off for the chance to face state Sen. Debbie Halvorson, the majority leader from Crete, who is

unopposed in the Democratic primary. Jason Wallace, a student at Illinois State University in Normal, is running as a Green Party candidate.

The 11th District includes Joliet and southwest suburbs New Lenox, Mokena, Frankfort and Crete, cutting south and west through Kankakee, Ottawa and Princeton, then south to Bloomington. In 2006, Weller won 55.1 percent of the vote, against Democrat John Pavich’s 44.9 percent. Bush won 52 percent to Kerry’s 45 percent.

Weller, who is married to a Guatemalan lawmaker, announced his retirement in September amid reports about questionable Nicaraguan land deals.

In the 6th District held by Roskam, Democrats will attempt once again to capture the seat held for a generation by GOP stalwart Henry Hyde. Roskam won the seat in 2006, beating back a challenge from Tammy Duckworth, an Army officer who lost her legs fighting in the Iraq war.

The Democratic front-runner this time around is another veteran, U.S. Army Reserve Ret. Col. Jill Morgenthaler of Des Plaines. Morgenthaler, who left her post as homeland security adviser to Gov. Rod Blagojevich to run her race for Congress, faces Stan Jagla of Roselle in the primary.

Lipinski, a Western Springs Democrat, faces several primary challengers. In fact, two of those contenders — Palos Hills Mayor Jerry Bennett and Army officer Jim Capparelli — have disputed allegations they joined the race at the behest of machine Democrats to dilute potential support for Mark Pera, a former prosecutor from Western Springs determined to unseat Lipinski.

Daniel Lipinski succeeded his powerful father in the seat three years ago. Bill Lipinski won the Democratic nomination in 2004, then withdrew from the race and engineered his son’s slating to the November ballot. The younger Lipinski, then a political science professor in Tennessee, handily won the general election. Liberal Democrats, particularly bloggers, are now targeting Daniel Lipinski for his conservative views.

The national parties aren’t waiting until after the primary to gear up their organizations in Illinois. They’re already on the ground and mobilizing to fight over this state’s congressional districts. GOP consultant John McGovern, formerly a top aide to Hastert, says he is optimistic his party will keep its seats in Illinois.

“With three open seats at stake, national Republicans have a compelling interest in making Illinois a top target,” he says. “Since all three districts are reliably Republican in nature, the increased financial and political support at the national level will generate added energy and excitement in those areas and could help increase the GOP turnout in Illinois in an already intense presidential year.”

Ryan Rudominer, a spokesman for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, says Illinois Republicans are in trouble.

“The political environment in Illinois continues to cause major headaches for cash-strapped Washington Republicans,” he says, “and it’s only getting worse with Republicans recently being blindsided by retirements, nasty infighting and a voting public that’s fed up with President Bush.” □

Aaron Chambers is Statehouse bureau chief for the Rockford Register Star.

Note: The State Board of Elections had until December 6 to certify ballots for counties. Because Illinois Issues went to press before that date, some candidates we identify may not appear on the ballot.

10th District



**Incumbent
Mark Kirk,**
Republican
of Highland Park

DEMOCRATS

Jay Footlik of Buffalo Grove
Daniel Seals of Wilmette

GREEN

David Kalbfleisch of Arlington Heights

Sweet home for Obama

The field of presidential candidates in Illinois will include a favorite son and a native daughter

by Daniel C. Vock

Dan Fisher met Barack Obama only once. It was three years ago, when Obama stopped in Gillespie, a town about 50 miles south of Springfield, during his campaign for the U.S. Senate. As he left the stage, Obama turned to Fisher, who was standing nearby holding an empty beer cup. Their conversation lasted just a few minutes.

Now, Fisher is sold. For the first time in his life, the 56-year-old is campaigning in Iowa. It's at least a four-hour drive to get to the Hawkeye State, but Fisher had gone three times by late October and had planned to return again. He had been trying to get residents there to support Obama in the January 3 Iowa caucuses, the nation's first presidential nominating contest.

When he goes door-to-door in Iowa, Fisher talks about Obama's experience in the Illinois Senate where, for most of Obama's career, Republicans were in control. In an environment like that, you have to reach across the aisle to get anything done, Fisher tells

potential caucus-goers there.

He sports two buttons, the familiar "Obama for President" variety and one from an earlier era. "If I were 21, I'd vote for John F. Kennedy," says the second one. Fisher has spent his whole life walking precincts, first as a kid when his father was the Democratic committeeman and then, for the past 20-plus years, as the captain himself. He even won a term as mayor.

"I'm not one of these kids," Fisher tells Iowa residents, alluding to the flocks of young people who have signed

on to Obama's campaign. "He's not a rock star to me. I've been around the block for a long time, and I think I know the goods when I see them. I know when it's real and when it's fake, and you can't fake what he's able to do."

From Iowa forward, Obama is counting on Illinoisans like Fisher to launch him to the presidency. The Land of Lincoln has provided its junior senator with volunteers, money, a political base and the experiences that, Obama says, make him qualified to lead the country. But Obama's not the only presidential hopeful looking for a big boost from Illinois in the primary.

Photograph courtesy of Obama for President



U.S. Sen. Barack Obama gives a campaign speech in Iowa.

His chief rival

for the Democratic nomination — U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York, born in Chicago and raised in the suburb of Park Ridge — isn't conceding Illinois to Obama. And Obama's candidacy indirectly ensured that the Republican presidential race would be one of the most competitive GOP contests here in decades. At this point in the

campaign, the GOP race is still fluid.

That's the setting in Illinois during a year when the presidential primaries promise to be wilder than most, even for contests famous for their upsets.

The presidential election in 2008 will be the first since 1928 with no incumbent president or vice president running. On top of that, dozens of states, including Illinois, have pushed their primaries earlier, in an attempt to become more relevant in the race. They want their elections held before all the major players drop out.

The result is that more than 20 states will hold nominating contests on February 5, earning it the nickname "Tsunami Tuesday." Among the potential prizes that day are some of the most populous states, which are rich in nomination votes but expensive to advertise in, including California, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee and, of course, Illinois.

The idea to move up Illinois' primary date came from House Speaker Michael Madigan of Chicago, chairman of the state Democratic Party, before Obama even announced his candidacy. Gov. Rod Blagojevich soon jumped on board, saying the move would "give Illinois voters an opportunity to send an early message in support of Sen. Obama and send him to victory."

In fact, Obama's candidacy has been one of the few things to unify the Illinois Democratic Party lately, as Madigan and Blagojevich have attacked each other verbally in the Capitol and in the media.

On the stump, Obama refers to his time in the Illinois legislature. He takes credit for sweeping ethics reforms, for overhauling the state's beleaguered death penalty system and for making health care available to more kids. And he frequently mentions that he worked with Republicans to accomplish those goals.

In running his campaign, he has kept Illinois front and center, too. He kicked off his bid with a speech on the steps of the Old State Capitol in Springfield, invoking Abraham Lincoln on a frigid February morning. His campaign is based in downtown Chicago, and many of his top advisers have deep roots in the area.

Not surprising, Obama has held far more campaign events here than any other candidate. *The Washington Post* recorded 82 visits by presidential candidates to Illinois by mid-October, placing it near the top of the list of states where candidates stopped. Obama accounted for 22 of those events. Clinton, with the second-most Illinois visits, accounted for 11.

Illinoisans, in turn, have thrown their weight behind Obama's effort in the early going. When Obama filed his nominating petitions to get on the Illinois ballot, he produced 55,000 signatures to Clinton's 15,000.

He tripled the campaign donations from Illinoisans that Clinton had through September, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Obama raised \$9 million to Clinton's \$2.8 million. No other candidate — Democrat or Republican — broke the \$1 million threshold.

"We're not taking anything for granted in this state, but we have built a significant base of support here with over 20,000 volunteers in this state who have signed

up to help out, to contact their friends and neighbors and also to help out in the early states to boost our organizational support in those locations," says Obama spokesman Ben LaBolt.

Still, it's tough to discount Clinton's strength.

An October poll of Illinois voters by Illinois Wesleyan University showed 36 percent supported Obama compared to 26 percent who backed Clinton. Obama's lead was even narrower among self-identified Democrats, although the numbers for the smaller group are far less reliable.

Tari Renner, the Illinois Wesleyan professor who oversaw the poll, says he was surprised at how close Clinton was to Obama. He says the numbers may underestimate Obama's strength with black voters here because black voters tend to decide on a candidate later in the campaign.

But he says Clinton's rising popularity nationally at the time could explain her strong showing in the poll.

J.B. Pritzker, a Chicago investment banker and a top Clinton supporter, says Clinton is getting stronger in Illinois as the campaign continues. He likens the situation to her standing in North Carolina, home of former U.S. Sen. John Edwards, another Democratic candidate. Despite an early "headwind" against her, Clinton has now caught up with Edwards in the polls there, Pritzker says.

"Just as it is with the voters, the same is true with fundraising. Of the 35 earliest primary states, she's winning in the polls in 34. In Illinois she's behind — but not by much," he says. Obama, Clinton and Edwards (who did not have a formal Illinois campaign in mid-November) each makes the case he or she is the most able to bring peace to Iraq and the Middle East.

Obama says his continued opposi-

Photograph courtesy of Hillary Clinton for President



U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York appears before a crowd in Iowa.

The GOP contest in Illinois has received considerably less attention than the Democratic race, but Republicans are optimistic that a spirited competition could reinvigorate the state Republican Party.



Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani hired staff for Illinois in June.

DEMOCRATS

Illinois delegates elected by district: **100**
 Other Illinois pledged delegates: **53**
 Unpledged Illinois delegates: **32**
 Total Illinois voting delegates: **185**
 Illinois alternates: **26**
 U.S. total voting delegates: **4,206**

HILLARY CLINTON

Key Illinois supporters: Chicago investment banker J.B. Pritzker, Chicago attorney Joseph Power, Chicago Alderman Danny Solis and state Sen. Martin Sandoval.

"I don't think we've had as prepared a person for the presidency as Hillary Clinton in decades."

— J.B. Pritzker

BARACK OBAMA

Key Illinois supporters: Talk show host Oprah Winfrey, U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin, Comptroller Dan Hynes and Cook County Board Commissioner John Daley.

"He's got that ability to make people do what needs to be done, even though all of the other factors around them tell them, 'Let it go. Don't get involved. Why mess with it?'"

— Dan Fisher

tion to the war — announced days before the U.S. Senate voted to authorize military action in Iraq — shows his good judgment in foreign policy. Clinton, who supported the 2002 measure, says the time she spent in the White House as First Lady gives her the know-how to deal with the situation. Edwards, who called his vote in favor of the resolution a mistake, has ratcheted up the pressure on his fellow Democrats to back an immediate withdrawal of American troops from Iraq.

While the war remains the dominant issue, each of the top contenders is trying to attract supporters by selling their vision for the country.

Obama says he wants to "turn the page" from divisive politics that have plagued Washington in the Bush and Clinton presidencies. Clinton has reminded voters of the successes of her husband's presidency in health care and the economy. Edwards' populist message promotes greater influence for the working-class and less for large corporations.

In the Illinois primary — unlike the general election — coming in a strong second still counts for something.

The real contest in the Illinois Democratic primary is for 100 delegates to the national convention in Denver, Colo., elected by congressional district. The party doesn't hand all of a state's delegates to the candidate who carries the state. Instead, lower-tier candidates (who get more than

15 percent statewide) can pick up delegates, too, depending on how well they do in each district.

That means Clinton can still cut into Obama's home-state advantage with a strong second-place showing. If Obama and Clinton split a 10-delegate district on a 60-40 tally, Obama would get six delegates and Clinton would get four.

Illinois Republicans also divvy up their delegates by congressional district, but voters pick the delegates directly. They can mark which presidential contender they support, but those results aren't binding. The question that matters is whom they select as delegates to the convention in Minneapolis in September.

The GOP contest in Illinois has received considerably less attention than the Democratic race, but Republicans are optimistic that a spirited competition could reinvigorate the state Republican Party.

"It's creating some interest in Illinois that we really haven't seen in a while," says House Minority Leader Tom Cross, an Oswego Republican, who's leading the Illinois campaign for former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani. In June, Giuliani hired several staff members to focus on Illinois, something not even Clinton has done.

Part of the reason GOP troops are so excited is because of Illinois' early primary date, designed to help Obama secure the Democratic nomination. The Republican



U.S. Sen. John McCain of Arizona's stops included Peoria (not pictured).

race nationally has been far more fluid than it has been for Democrats, raising the possibility that it won't be settled by February 5.

The wide-open contest means more Republicans are getting involved with grassroots organization, as they pass petitions and try to convince neighbors to support a particular candidate. That builds positive energy and organization that's been lacking in the Illinois GOP ever since scandal tarnished Gov. George Ryan in the late 1990s, several Republicans say.

Art Hanlon, the chief political consultant for the state Senate Republicans, says the GOP presidential campaigns may start to air TV commercials and bring in their candidates because they figure Illinois' 57 Republican delegates are in play.

Like many other Illinois Republicans, Hanlon says a GOP nominee could win Illinois in November if Clinton becomes the Democratic nominee.

He also says any boost the party gets from the presidential race could be valuable for legislative races in 2010, when putting a Republican majority in the General Assembly would give the GOP a chance to draw the new legislative districts in 2011.

State Sen. Bill Brady, a Bloomington Republican in charge of former U.S. Sen. Fred Thompson's Illinois efforts, notes that hundreds of potential Republican delegates and alternates will appear on the ballot because so many GOP

candidates plan to field full slates.

Plus, Brady says, the competition among Republican camps is far less personal this year than it has been during statewide GOP contests in the last three election cycles. No Illinoisans are on the Republican ticket (although Thompson's wife is from Naperville), which, Brady says, makes it easier for the factions to remain friendlier with each other.

The prospect of rebuilding the Illinois Republican Party is one reason state Sen. Dan Rutherford, a Chenoa Republican, says he's serving as former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney's Illinois chairman.

During a one-on-one meeting with Romney in Boston, Rutherford says he asked Romney a blunt question: How could the former GOP governor of a heavily Democratic state help revitalize Illinois' beleaguered Republican Party?

"I need your help, governor," Rutherford recalls saying. "If I'm going to commit my effort and my resources in Illinois, I need you to commit to me [that] you'll be here to help me. Come in and help."

Rutherford credits Romney for following through by visiting Illinois often and sending family members to build support.

On one September swing through the state, Romney stopped in central Illinois, a region all but forgotten by presidential candidates since Obama's February announcement in Springfield (U.S. Sen.

REPUBLICANS

Delegates elected by district: 57

Illinois at large delegates chosen by convention: 10

Illinois "super delegates": 3

Illinois total delegates: 70

Illinois alternates: 67

U.S. total delegates: 2,380

RUDY GIULIANI

Key Illinois supporters: Former Govs. Jim Edgar and James Thompson, House Minority Leader Tom Cross, DuPage County State's Attorney Joe Birkett

"He is the strongest candidate against Hillary." — Tom Cross

JOHN MCCAIN

Key Illinois supporters: State Rep. Jim Durkin of Western Springs, Sen. Minority Leader Frank Watson and U.S. Rep. Ray LaHood

"If the prototypical Republican primary voter is someone who is conservative, who believes in less government, less spending and is fairly conservative on social issues, John McCain of the top tier is the only one who fits that profile." — Jim Durkin

MITT ROMNEY

Key Illinois supporters: Former House Speaker Dennis Hastert and state Sen. Dan Rutherford of Chenoa

"Strong economy, strong military, strong family: That's the consistent message of Mitt Romney nationally. I think the [reason] he's becoming attractive in Illinois is [Illinois voters] are getting to know him." — Dan Rutherford

FRED THOMPSON

Key Illinois supporters: U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo and state Sens. Bill Brady of Bloomington, Carole Pankau of Roselle and Dave Syverson of Rockford

"Among the base of the Republican Party, his common-sense, consistent-conservative agenda and, frankly, his life story ... cause people to gravitate toward him." — Bill Brady

John McCain of Arizona did visit Peoria, too). Romney held a fundraiser and met supporters in Champaign and then met with business leaders in Chicago.

While in the city, Romney tried to take advantage of his experience rescuing the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics by vowing to work harder than any other candidate to make sure Chicago won the contest to host the 2016 Summer Games.

Still, Romney hasn't been able to break through the pack of GOP contenders in Illinois, according to the October Wesleyan poll. He's still bunched in with Giuliani, McCain and Thompson.

Rep. Jim Durkin, a Westchester Republican, McCain's point person in Illinois, says support for most of the Republican candidates right now is likely "soft" and could change easily depending on what happens in Iowa, New Hampshire and other early primary states. But McCain supporters are likely to stick with him because they know him from his 2000 presidential bid, Durkin says.

Nationally, the GOP contenders are trying to distinguish themselves as "true conservatives" because so many of them have spotty track records with the right wing of their party.

Giuliani is emphasizing national security, capitalizing on his fame as "America's Mayor" for leading New York City through the painful aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. But Giuliani, a twice-divorced man who famously dressed in drag and kissed real estate mogul Donald Trump, has had a hard time appealing to social



Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney campaigned in Iowa last summer.

conservatives because of his positions in support of abortion rights and gay rights (but not gay marriage). He also touted tough gun control measures when he was New York mayor and credited them for helping reduce the crime rate there.

McCain has been battered by both the right and the left in recent years, tarnishing his image as a maverick that he cultivated during his unsuccessful 2000 presidential bid. The former Navy pilot and Vietnam War prisoner has been one of Bush's biggest backers in the Iraq conflict, to the dismay of Democrats and independents. His positions on immigration and campaign finance reform lowered his stature

among Republicans.

Romney, the former Massachusetts governor, highlights running an elite capital fund. But his GOP bona fides are in doubt, too, especially because of stances he took in an unsuccessful 1994 run against U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy, a Massachusetts Democrat, when he supported abortion rights, gay rights and affirmative action.

Many hoped Thompson's late entry to the race would give conservative voters a ready alternative and one who, thanks to

Thompson's acting career, would appeal to more moderate voters. Still, revelations that Thompson once lobbied on behalf of Planned Parenthood and reminders that he backed McCain's campaign finance reforms dampened excitement for the Tennessean.

According to the Illinois campaigns for all four men, though, Illinois Republicans are looking for a candidate who can win in November more than they're looking for ideological purity.

Rutherford, the Romney supporter, says electability is going to be the dominant issue among Illinois primary voters. Romney's gaining, he says, because more voters are convinced he can win the White House.

Cross, the Illinois House Republican leader, says Giuliani appeals to moderate, suburban voters and even to conservative Republicans who disagree with the former New York mayor on social issues. Why? "He is the strongest candidate against Hillary." □

Daniel C. Vock is a Washington, D.C.-based reporter for Stateline.org and a frequent contributor to Illinois Issues.

Photograph courtesy of Friends of Fred Thompson, Inc.



Former U.S. Sen. Fred Thompson's wife was born in suburban Naperville.

Orchids and onions

Illinois politicians could learn a thing or two
about innovation from other states

by Jack R. Van Der Slik

The Ash Institute at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in 2007 recognized seven policy innovations it deemed worthy of national notice and emulation.

I took pleasure in noting that my recently adopted state of Florida led the list of award winners this year with ACCESS Florida, a streamlined and efficient way to enroll food stamp, welfare and Medicaid applicants. It's an online system using not only state-run offices, but also 2,500 "partner agencies" — churches, libraries, senior centers and homeless shelters.

Then I looked for accomplishments by Illinois, where I spent more than 30

years observing and commenting on political issues and partisan politics. Sorry, the Ash Institute found nothing going on in Illinois worth crowing about.

However, because the Ash Institute was claiming credit for 20 years of awards, I took a more thorough look at the record as published in *Governing* 2007. What recognition has come to Illinois for policy innovation? The good news is that Illinois has been a policy innovation leader. Let me offer some data to put the point into perspective. Over the years, starting in 1986 (no awards were made in 1989 or 2002), the Institute acknowledged 181 award-winning programs. Ninety came

from units of local governments, mostly cities, counties and school districts. From 1995 onward, awards went to programs of the U.S. government, mostly to units in Cabinet-level departments. They received 25 of the awards. The remaining 66 awards went to various states.

In terms of recognized innovations, Illinois actually is a leading state. It tied for second with California, New York and North Carolina, lagging only Massachusetts. Perhaps it's to be expected that large-population states would dominate. Illinois is one of those. Not included in the top 10 as innovators are Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas. Michigan is missing entirely. Most

Innovation in American Government awards per state since 1985



Seven	Massachusetts
Five	California; Illinois; New York; North Carolina
Four	Georgia; Kentucky
Three	Minnesota; Oregon; Vermont
Two	Arizona; Florida; Iowa; Maryland; New Jersey; Pennsylvania; Texas
One	Arkansas; Connecticut; Missouri; Ohio; Oklahoma; Washington; West Virginia; Wisconsin

Is it too speculative to observe that policy innovation flowered when neither party controlled both the legislature and the governorship? Then there was cross-fertilization of policy ideas and action by compromise and accommodation involving Republicans and Democrats.

of the states, 27 in all, received no recognition for innovation.

The findings reminded me of a systematic study published nearly 40 years ago by Jack Walker in the *American Political Science Review*. He calculated innovation scores for the American states. The top three in order were New York, Massachusetts and California. Illinois was 13th. His method was to examine 88 programmatic innovations adopted in the 48 states prior to 1965. Thus, he determined which states led the way. It is worth noting that of the 25 states (excluding Hawaii and Alaska) that received no awards from the Ash Institute, 14 were in the bottom half of the innovation scores Walker reported a generation ago. Policy innovation apparently is a learned behavior, and it persists in the culture.

But enough about the other states. When was Illinois recognized for innovations and what were they? Realize, of course, that most innovations were put in place three or four years before they were recognized and rewarded. Illinois' awards were for the following:

- 1986. Quality Incentive Program (QUIP). The program was aimed at elderly citizens receiving long-term care from the state. The state established a rating system for quality assessments of care facilities, including input from clients, which brought about improved services because of QUIP evaluation and education processes.

- 1986. One Church/One Child. The program was originated at Holy Angels Catholic Church on Chicago's South Side by the Rev. George Clements. It was implemented under the Department of Children and Family Services and successfully reduced a backlog of unadopted black and multiracial children.

- 1987. Parents Too Soon. Gov. James Thompson mandated coordinated efforts by Public Health, Public Aid and Children and Family Services to work with community-based efforts to discourage children from having children. The state partners with counties, hospitals, schools, church centers and health agencies. The goals are to reduce teen pregnancy and infant mortality.

- 1988. Project Match. Aimed at persons in the "hardest-to-employ" category, it coordinates schooling, job training and job placement, resulting in improved job retention. Through long-term commitments to the clients, it promotes achieving self-sufficiency.

About the awards

Innovations in American Government, sponsored by the Ash Institute at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, is a program designed to identify and honor outstanding examples of creative problem solving in the public sector. The awards are presented to various types of units of government, including federal, state, local and tribal.

To qualify, initiatives must be administered under the authority of one or more governmental entities. The program must be in operation and must have been implemented a year prior to the submission date. The Innovations in American Government awards were initiated in 1985. Honorees have been acknowledged in several policy areas, including juvenile justice, recycling, adult education, parks, debt management and public health. □

- 2000. Performance-based contracting. This Department of Children and Family Services program gives financial incentives to placement agencies to reunite children with families, dramatically lowering the number of those in foster care, reducing costs and moving children into permanent family settings.

Illinois focused its innovations on human services, particularly for the young, adolescents and the aged. The Shakespearean observation that "the quality of mercy is not strain'd" holds true in Illinois, and these programs do persist. (For award details, see www.innovations.harvard.edu.)

But note the era of innovation: the halcyon days of Gov. James Thompson — four innovations — and one in the more penurious time of Gov. Jim Edgar. Since then, nothing. Zip. Zilch! Not in the "take care of our friends" Gov. George Ryan's administration. Certainly not in the "my way or the highway" time of Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Is it too speculative to observe that policy innovation flowered when neither party controlled both the legislature and the governorship? Then there was cross-fertilization of policy ideas and action by compromise and accommodation involving Republicans and Democrats. Perhaps that is a matter for both voters and candidates to consider in the run-up to Illinois elections in 2008 and 2010.

Policy innovation is a learned behavior. It needs both popular and political support. Illinois has those assets and should reclaim its place as an innovative policy leader. But that is not likely when its partisan leaders are suing one another instead of encouraging creative policy in the legislature and the executive departments. It is past time for Illinois political leaders to set aside personal rivalries and set free the sources of innovation in the political system that can address the policy needs of the people. □

Jack Van Der Slik is a political science professor emeritus at what is now the University of Illinois at Springfield. Once a frequent commentator on Illinois state politics, he now lives in Florida.

George Ryan starts sentence

Former Gov. **George Ryan** started his six-and-a-half-year sentence in federal prison November 7. A U.S. Supreme Court justice denied his plea to remain free on bail while trying to appeal his 2006 corruption conviction before the nation's highest court, the last option available.

After a seven-month trial, he and Chicago businessman and close friend **Lawrence Warner** were found guilty of using public office for personal gain. But they remained free for more than a year and a half during appeals.

Ryan, a Kankakee Republican, served as secretary of state from 1991 to 1999 and governor from 1999 to 2003.

Federal officials made the first arrests in the Operation Safe Road investigation, which probed the exchange of licenses for bribes at Illinois secretary of state facilities, at the end of Ryan's term as secretary of state. Seventy-five people were convicted in the probe.

Prior to his legal troubles, Gov. Ryan enacted a \$12 billion infrastructure program known as Illinois First, the last major capital plan to date. He also gained national recognition when he reformed the state's capital justice system by issuing a moratorium on executions, which continues, after 13 Death Row inmates were proved wrongly convicted.

Ryan previously served as Illinois lieutenant governor and Illinois House speaker.

He is now serving time in a federal facility in Oxford, Wis.

Some members of the Republican Party see the start of Ryan's sentence as closure on a nearly eight-year ordeal.

"That's behind us, and now the Republican Party can start building back," says Tom Ryder, former Republican leader for the Illinois House while Ryan was governor. "That issue's completed."



George Ryan

J. Dennis Hastert resigns

A special election will be needed to fill the remainder of the term of retiring Rep. J. Dennis Hastert. He was the longest-serving GOP U.S. House speaker.

That means Gov. Rod Blagojevich is responsible for scheduling a special primary election, which could fall on the same date as the regular February 5 primary.

Prior to serving six years in the Illinois legislature, Hastert spent 16 as a teacher and wrestling coach. The Plano Republican later served 11 terms in Congress between 1987 and 2007 and took the oath of House speaker in 1999 and again in 2003. That reign ended in 2007 when Democrats took control of Congress.

Hastert said he was proudest of his role in creating tax-free health savings accounts, reforming Medicare and providing defense of the nation after 9/11.

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A whistle-blower fights for his state job

Matthew Magalis was fired by the Illinois Department of Human Services October 10 following recommendations by the governor's executive inspector general. The recommendations related to a previous report about a former agency employee allegedly doing political and private work on state time.

The Associated Press reported in November that the state agency fired Magalis for admitting he took a co-worker's key, unlocked a cabinet, obtained a confidential, investigative report and faxed it to a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*.

The newspaper then published an article in October 2006 that said Gov. Rod Blagojevich's executive inspector general wrote a confidential report recommending the firing of Department of Human Services employee **Khalil Shalabi** for organizing a political fundraiser for the governor and operating a private business on state time.

Magalis' Springfield attorney Carl Draper says his client did nothing wrong and that the U.S. Constitution protects whistle-blowers.

"The state has to prove that he has committed some act that is cause for discharge," Draper says. "The question is: On what basis do they think it's appropriate to discipline him at all?"

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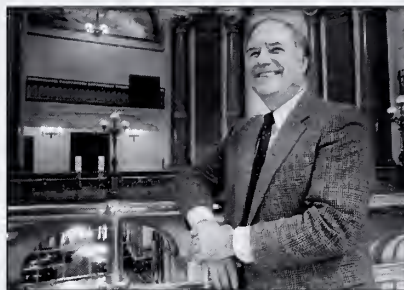
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Charles N. Wheeler III



The biggest concern for most legislative incumbents might be remembering to vote

by Charles N. Wheeler III

Read the letters to the editor in the daily newspaper or listen to local talk radio, and you can't help but conclude that citizens seem pretty darn unhappy with the job performance of the Illinois General Assembly and Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Given such apparent public dissatisfaction, one reasonably might expect to see a groundswell of challenges to sitting lawmakers in the 2008 elections, mounted by disgruntled citizens hoping to oust incumbents they see as incompetent at best and downright crooked at worst.

Yet when the filing deadline for the February 5 primary was approved — the earliest in state history — the biggest concern for most incumbents seeking another term would seem to be remembering to vote for themselves in February and again on November 4 to assure victory.

In fact, fewer than one in five current lawmakers who filed for re-election face primary challengers, while almost 55 percent were the only candidates to file in their districts, assuring them of their party nomination and most likely clearing the way for automatic victory in the general election. Opposing party leaders still may appoint someone to run under their banner in November, but such latecomers rarely do well.

The numbers tell the story. In the Senate, where 40 seats are up, 12 of 23 Democrat and nine of 14 Republican

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incumbents have free rides — 57 percent. (One Democrat and two Republicans are not seeking new terms.) Only six Democrats and one Republican — 19 percent — have primary challengers.

In the House, where all 118 seats are up, 35 of 64 Democrat and 24 of 45 GOP officeholders have no opponents, either in February or in November — 54 percent. (Three Democrats and six Republicans are leaving office.) Just 19 Democrats and two Republicans — 19 percent — have intraparty contests.

Combining the numbers for the two chambers, 55 percent of incumbents were unchallenged when filing closed, while 19 percent had primary rivals. Democrats were five times as likely to face party battles as Republicans, with three-quarters of the party fights in 15 House and four Senate districts in Chicago and the suburbs where the majority of voters are African American or Hispanic.

Could this be another front in the

ongoing power struggle between Blagojevich and House Speaker Michael Madigan, an effort by the governor to replace pro-Madigan minority lawmakers with newly minted representatives he could control?

While popular among conspiracy theorists, that analysis is weakened by recent polls showing that the governor's popularity is waning in the minority community. For example, the Chicago-based Glengariff Group reported last month that Blagojevich's job approval rating dropped to just 38 percent among African Americans from 81 percent in May, part of an overall sharp decline for the governor among Democrats and Chicagoans. So the governor's blessing might not carry a lot of weight these days.

History also suggests that a falling out among top Democrats isn't needed to spark heated primary battles in minority districts. In 2004, for example, 13 of 19 House Democrats with March challengers represented majority black or Hispanic districts. Back then, Blagojevich and Madigan were on good terms; the speaker and Senate President Emil Jones Jr., also a Chicago Democrat, had just guided to passage the rookie governor's entire first-year program. Two years later, when Madigan and Jones were co-chairing the Blagojevich campaign for a second term, 12 of the 14 House Democrats facing primary challenges represented minority districts.

The evidence seems clear: Rivalries among local political leaders and ward organizations can engender primary challenges to incumbent lawmakers without meddling from the top.

But competition is relative, right? So maybe the overall 2008 numbers are higher than usual, proof of a disgruntled electorate stirring itself. In fact, 2008 filings pretty much mirror the experience of the last two election cycles. In 2006, for example, 57 percent of the 148 incumbent lawmakers seeking re-election had no opposition after filing, while only 18 percent had primary opposition. Two years earlier, in 2004, 57 percent of 138 sitting lawmakers were looking at free rides after filing and just 16 percent faced party rivals.

Just because the number of insurgent candidates hasn't mushroomed doesn't mean all the signs of voter dissatisfaction are misleading, however.

"The general citizenry has got to think long and hard about getting ready to run," explains Chris Mooney, a political studies professor at the University of

***Just because the number
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Illinois whose specialty is legislative politics. "People are not saying, 'I'm throwing down my shovel and heading to the state capital.' It's a lot of work getting on the ballot."

The state's earlier primary date — moved to early February from mid-March — also may have limited the number of challengers, Mooney says. "People were just not geared up for it."

Moreover, "incumbent protection gerrymandering" discourages would-be candidates, Mooney believes. Whichever party controls the mapmaking, legislative district boundaries are drawn to maxi-

mize the number of districts the party can expect to win, while minimizing its rival's chances. Few districts wind up being competitive.

Rather than looking at candidate filings, Mooney expects the impact of citizen disenchantment to be seen at the polls, where voters can translate their feelings into action, perhaps by voting against incumbents across the board.

But a "throw the bums out" spirit could be dampened by the earlier primary date. While mid-March weather can be iffy, a pleasant forecast is much more likely than Illinoisans will face in early February. The prospect of cold, snowy weather might discourage turnout, always a benefit to incumbents who can count on hard-core partisans to vote.

A pretty safe bet, though, is that the cast of the 96th General Assembly will bear a striking resemblance to the current crew, whatever misgivings voters might have about its performance. □

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.



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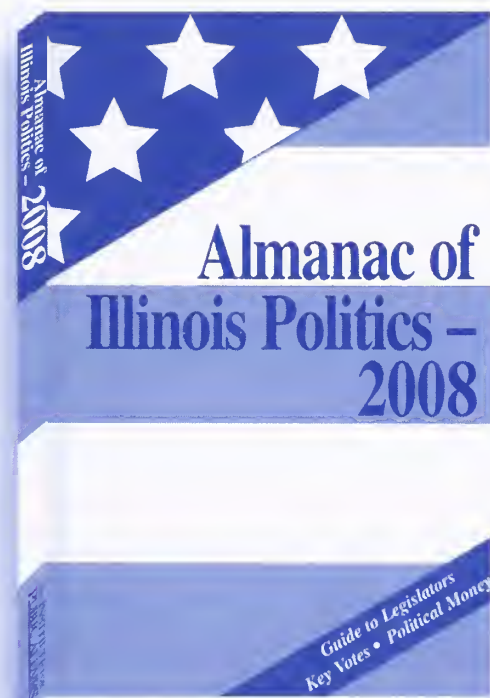
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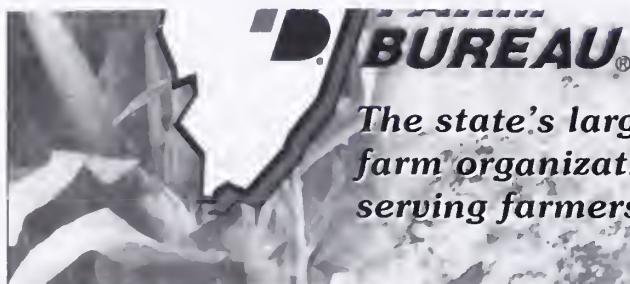
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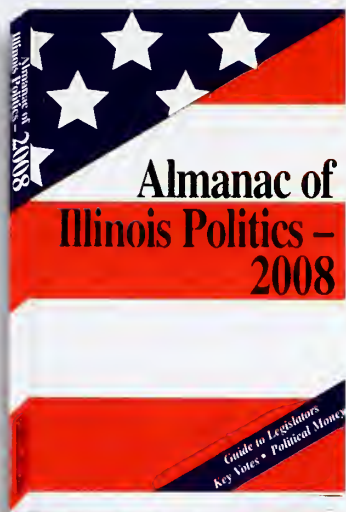
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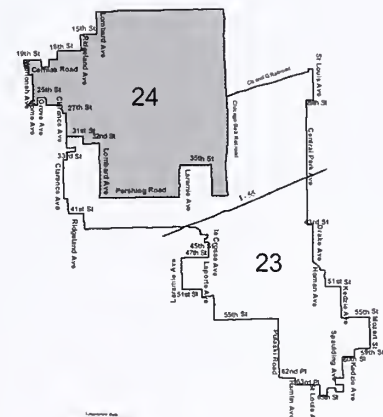
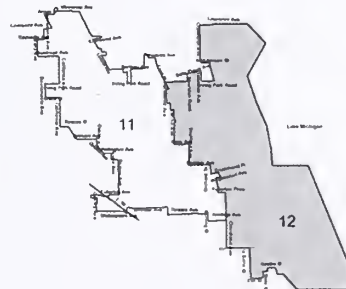
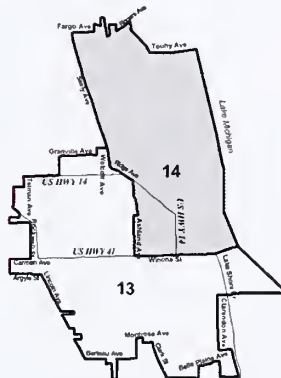
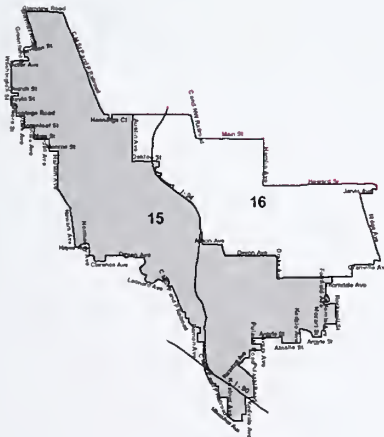
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